DEADPOOL CLASSIC

ULTIMATE DEADPOOL

MARVEL

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WRITERS: **Brian Michael Bendis, Joe Kelly, Judd Winick, Tony Bedard, Rick Remender, Peter Milligan** & **Paul Tobin** with **Tom DeFalco, Man of Action, Ed Valentine, Joe Caramagna, Ryan Ferrier** & **Kate Leth**

PENCILERS: **Mark Bagley, Ethan Van Sciver, Jim Calafiore, Mike McKone, Shawn Moll, Tomm Coker, Dalibor Talajić, Laurence Campbell, Goran Parlov, Leandro Fernández** & **Ronan Cliquet** with **Ron Lim, Logan Faerber** & **Brittney L. Williams**

INKERS: **John Dell, Mark McKenna, Danny Miki, Jon Holdredge, Tomm Coker, Dalibor Talajić, Laurence Campbell, Goran Parlov, Leandro Fernandez** & **Amilton Santos** with **Ethan Van Sciver, Yancey Labat, Scott Koblish, Rodney Ramos, Scott Hanna, Pond Scum, John Czop, Nelson DeCastro, Al Milgrom, Eric Cannon, Mark Irwin, Livesay, Walden Wong, Logan Faerber** & **Brittney L. Williams**

COLORISTS: **Justin Ponsor, Richard Isanove, Tom Smith, Transparency Digital, Jung Choi, Daniel Freedman, Lee Loughridge, Chris Sotomayor** & **Sotocolor** with **Laura Martin, Logan Faerber** & **Megan Wilson**

LETTERERS: **Dave Sharpe, Sharpefont's Paul Tutrone, Richard Starkings** & **Comicraft and VC's Cory Petit, Clayton Cowles & Joe Caramagna** with **Jim Novak** & **Travis Lanham**

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FRONT COVER ARTISTS: **Mark Bagley & Richard Isanove**

BACK COVER ARTIST: **Skottie Young**

Deadpool created by **Rob Liefeld** & **Fabian Nicieza**

COLLECTION EDITOR: **Mark D. Beazley**
ASSISTANT EDITOR: **Caitlin O'Connell**
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BOOK DESIGNER: **Adam Del Re**
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DIGITAL MANAGER/PRODUCTION: **Tim Smith 3**
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Introduction by Ralph Macchio

It's often said certain Marvel characters bring out the best in their respective writers. Well, there's something about Deadpool that just brings forth the unabashed, off-the-wall crazy in anyone who scripts him. He's a fourth wall–breaking, wisecracking, maniacal, mercurial mercenary who seems to have a life of his own no matter his scrivener. He first appeared in *The New Mutants #98*, back in February 1991. Rob Liefeld and Fabian Nicieza were the co-creators. Originally, our Merc with a Mouth was played strictly as a super villain. Over time, however, he began to assume the kind of antihero status that is most identified with him today. It wasn't really planned, it's just the way he went organically. As I said, a life of his own. Truthfully, I find him very difficult to characterize. His origin, for instance, has never been firmly established; sometimes Deadpool has actually kidded about it, tweaking the readers' collective nose. There have been occasions where he has acted surprisingly heroic, though many more in which the mercenary aspect of his persona is prevalent. And when he's breaking the fourth wall and speaking directly to the reader, he's fully aware that he's a fictional character existing in a comic book. He does let the reader in on the joke, taking shots at a strict adherence to continuity, etc. So, really, he can function quite effectively as a mouthpiece for the writer to vent, as well. And that's not something you can do with a lot of comics characters.

They say you know a man through his actions. I think whoever said that never encountered our wondrous Wade Wilson. Here's a gent whose actions swing all the way from outright murder if the mission calls for it to occasional acts of unexpected compassion. For both writers and readers, his often contradictory nature is a prime appeal of the character. With Wade, you're dealing with a superhuman (he's got a major healing factor, folks) who's utterly unpredictable. In fact, I'd hazard that no character in the Marvel canon is as completely haywire as Deadpool. Yet, there is his mercenary aspect that anchors him a bit. And I stress—a bit. Both Brian Bendis and I were aware of his wild-card status when we decided to create a version of him in our *Ultimate Spider-Man* title back in 2006. All four of the issues featuring our rendition of Deadpool are lovingly reprinted in this grab bag of goodies you're soon to savor. In case you're unfamiliar with it, Ultimate Marvel was a separate imprint created by former president Bill Jemas and current chief creative officer Joe Quesada in the early 2000s. The concept was to use this imprint as an entry point for new readers as we wipe the slate clean of decades of continuity and begin the adventures of Your Friendly Neighborhood Spider-Man and other heroes to start afresh. I was incredibly fortunate to be given the chance to edit *Ultimate Spider-Man*, and later, the entire Ultimate line. Writer Brian Bendis was new to Marvel when he took over this book, though artist Mark Bagley was an old hand at illustrating the web-spinner. Me, I'd just come off a five-year stint as editor of the entire Spidey line. I loved the opportunity to work on a brand spanking new Spider-Man book that reset the clock all the way back to the origin.

Well, here we were, past 90 issues of *Ultimate Spider-Man*, with our different take on both Spidey's marvelous supporting cast and rogues' gallery, ready to tackle the ever-intriguing Wade Wilson in a highly collectible quartet of tales. What Brian came up with was fantastic: A Wakandan War veteran named Wadey Wilson, who functions as a mercenary for a reality television show. Brian used the island of Krakoa from mainstream X-Men continuity as a place where the nation of Genosha imprisons mutants. That's only the beginning. Once the mutants arrive, they're hunted and killed for the entertainment value as the hunt is televised, all under the directorial purview of the malevolent Mojo. In steps Wadey Wilson, A.K.A. Deadpool, as he assumes the task of taking down Spider-Man and members of the captured X-Men with his group of Reavers on Krakoa. Talk about fanatics! These guys hate mutants so much they volunteer for biogenic enhancement surgeries to become weaponized to take down their genetically different brethren. Just wait until you get a look at this wild bunch on the last page of issue #91! I remember when this page came into the office from the often-underrated Mark Bagley. Wow! Even though the reader would have to wait a month to see them in action, it just had to be worth the wait. Of course, you folks are much luckier because you only have to turn the page and—voila! You have the whole kit 'n caboodle at your fingertips. Now you might be asking, how did our young web-slinger get mixed up with the X-Men on a reality television show filmed on an island? That's a part of the mystery that I'm not going to spoil for you. Get ready to be shocked. Bendis and Bagley make it all work splendidly. Rereading these issues made me recall how much I truly loved working on Ultimate Spider-Man, with virtually the same creative team year after year. It's an editor's dream! Much new ground was broken and we had the heady opportunity to pick whatever characters we wanted from the vast Marvel menagerie and put the Ultimate spin on them. I hope you enjoy Brian's take on the Merc with a Mouth, and also get a taste of the many soap-operatic elements that are so much a part of Spider-Man's appeal no matter what reality he appears in.

Much as I was able to wax ecstatic about Ultimate Wadey, there's lots more to this stellar collection of Deadpool derring-do. For example, the biggest event in years in Marvel comics was the recently completed *Secret Wars* spectacular that restarted the whole shebang. *Secret Wars: Battleworld* was an ancillary title and issue #3 spotlighted the always-entertaining Mr. Wilson. What I found particularly interesting about the solo story in the back of the issue is that Deadpool is out of costume with his cancer-ravaged face on full display. We sometimes forget with all the wisecracking he does how mutilated Deadpool is under that sleek red-and-black costume. Something I think that occasionally gets lost in all the fourth wall–breaking, too. Wade has a face that would make the Phantom of the Opera run screaming from the room. But he fits so well into this other knucklehead niche that the unpleasant reality beneath the mask gets relegated to the background.

It's about time to let you dive right into our misanthropic mercenary's many escapades. Within these pages he'll pop up everywhere from the alternate reality of *The Exiles* to a *What If...?* story where he becomes the alien symbiote Venom. Through it all, you'll learn the all-important lesson that the omniscient Watcher himself tells us in the *Heroes Reborn: Remnants* issue: "Chaos. Mania. Death. No matter pocket universe. Parallel World, or paradoxical construct... Every universe…must have a Deadpool." Believe it!

Enjoy!

Ralph Macchio

Ralph Macchio

Ralph Macchio spent over 35 years at Marvel, starting as an assistant editor and later writing Avengers, Thor *and many others. As editor, he oversaw books across the Marvel line, including shepherding the Ultimate line into existence, and editing all of Stephen King's Marvel adaptations.*

ULTIMATE
SPIDER-MAN®
ISSUE
91
DEADPOOL: PART 1
BENDIS
BAGLEY
DELL
MARVEL®

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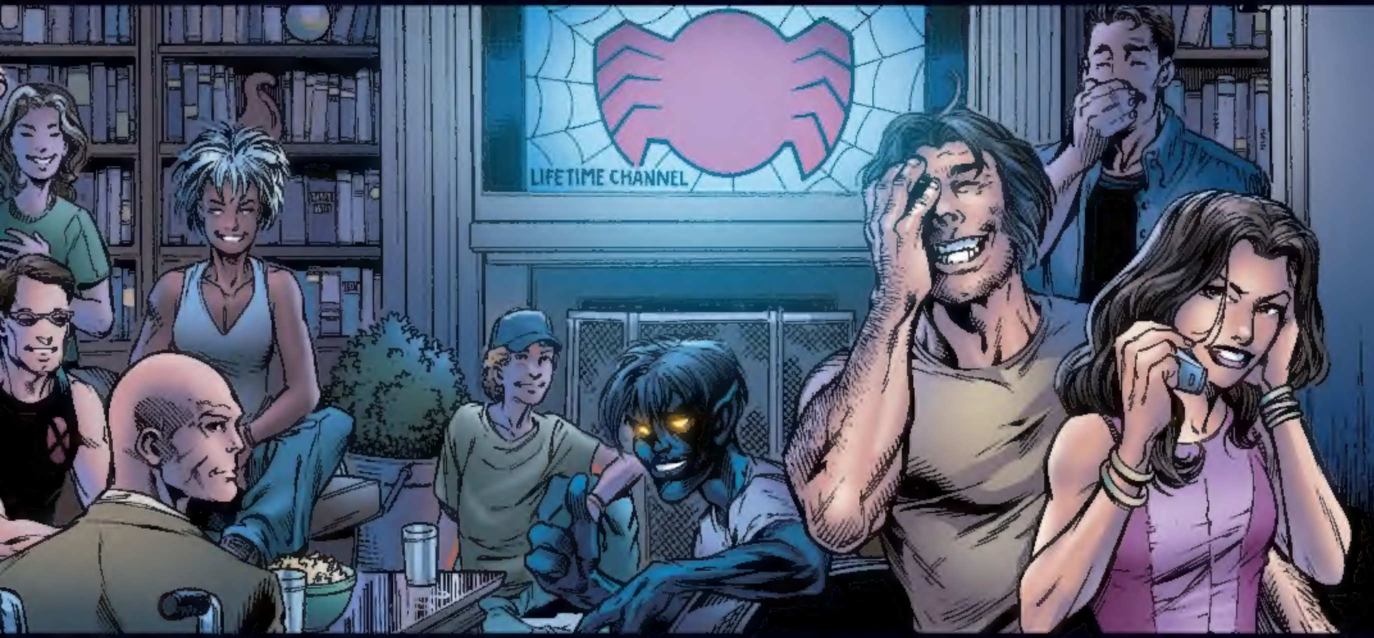
PREVIOUSLY IN ULTIMATE SPIDER-MAN...

The bite of a genetically altered spider granted high school student Peter Parker incredible, arachnid-like powers! When a burglar killed his beloved Uncle Ben, a grief-stricken Peter vowed to use his amazing abilities to protect his fellow man. He learned the invaluable lesson that with great power must also come great responsibility...

Having recently broken up with his girlfriend, Mary Jane, Peter started dating Kitty Pryde, member of the super-powered mutant team, the X-Men. But Peter's about to discover that the love-life of super heroes is a complicated thing...



DEADPOOL

PART 1 of 4

Brian Michael **Bendis** WRITER
Mark **Bagley** PENCILER
John **Dell** INKER
Justin **Ponsor** COLORIST
VC's Cory **Petit** LETTERER

Jacob **Chabot** PRODUCTION
Nicole **Wiley Boose** ASST. EDITOR
John **Barber** ASSOC. EDITOR
Ralph **Macchio** EDITOR
Joe **Quesada** EDITOR IN CHIEF
Dan **Buckley** PUBLISHER

Cover: Mark Bagley & Richard Isanove

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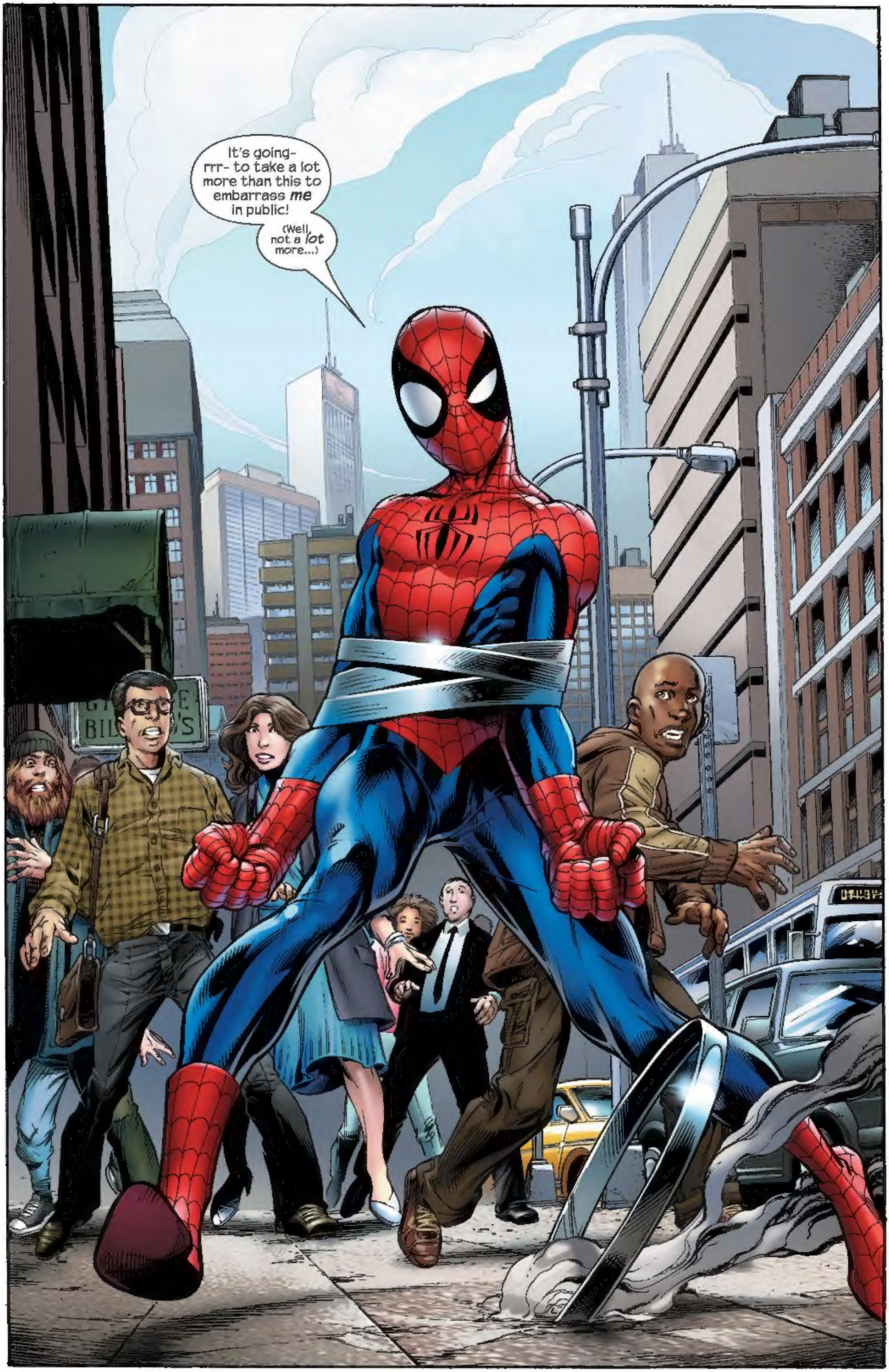
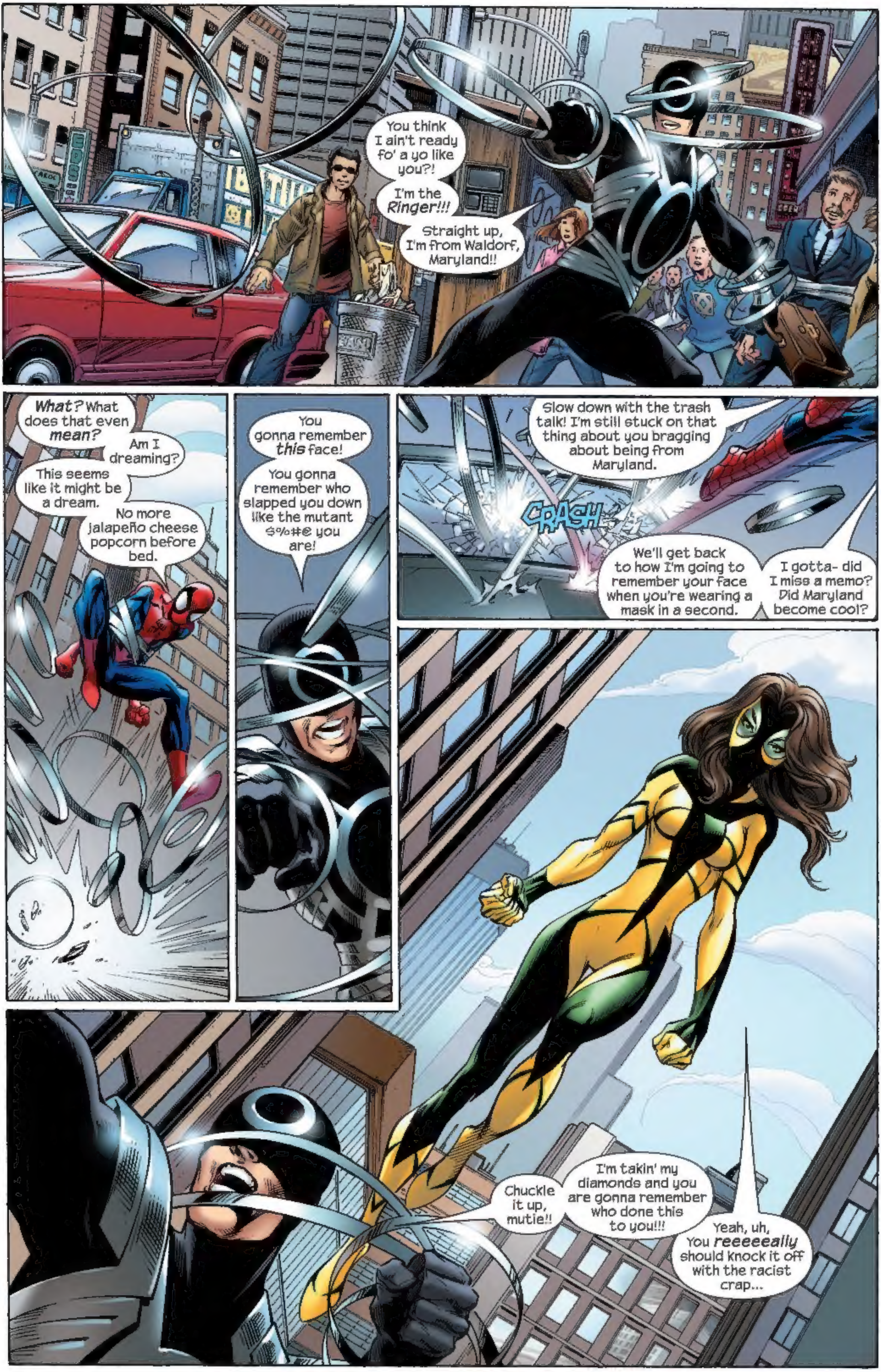
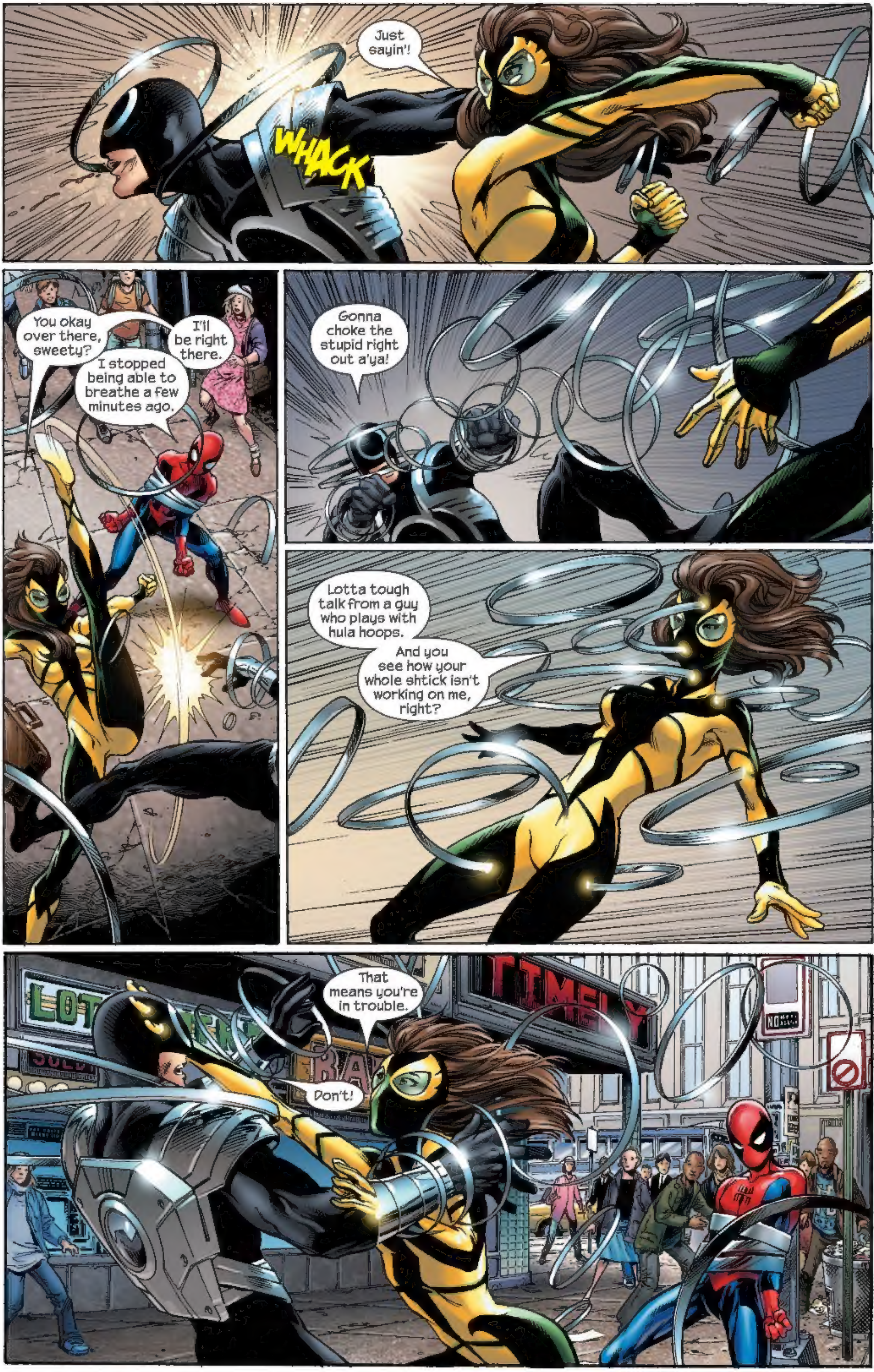
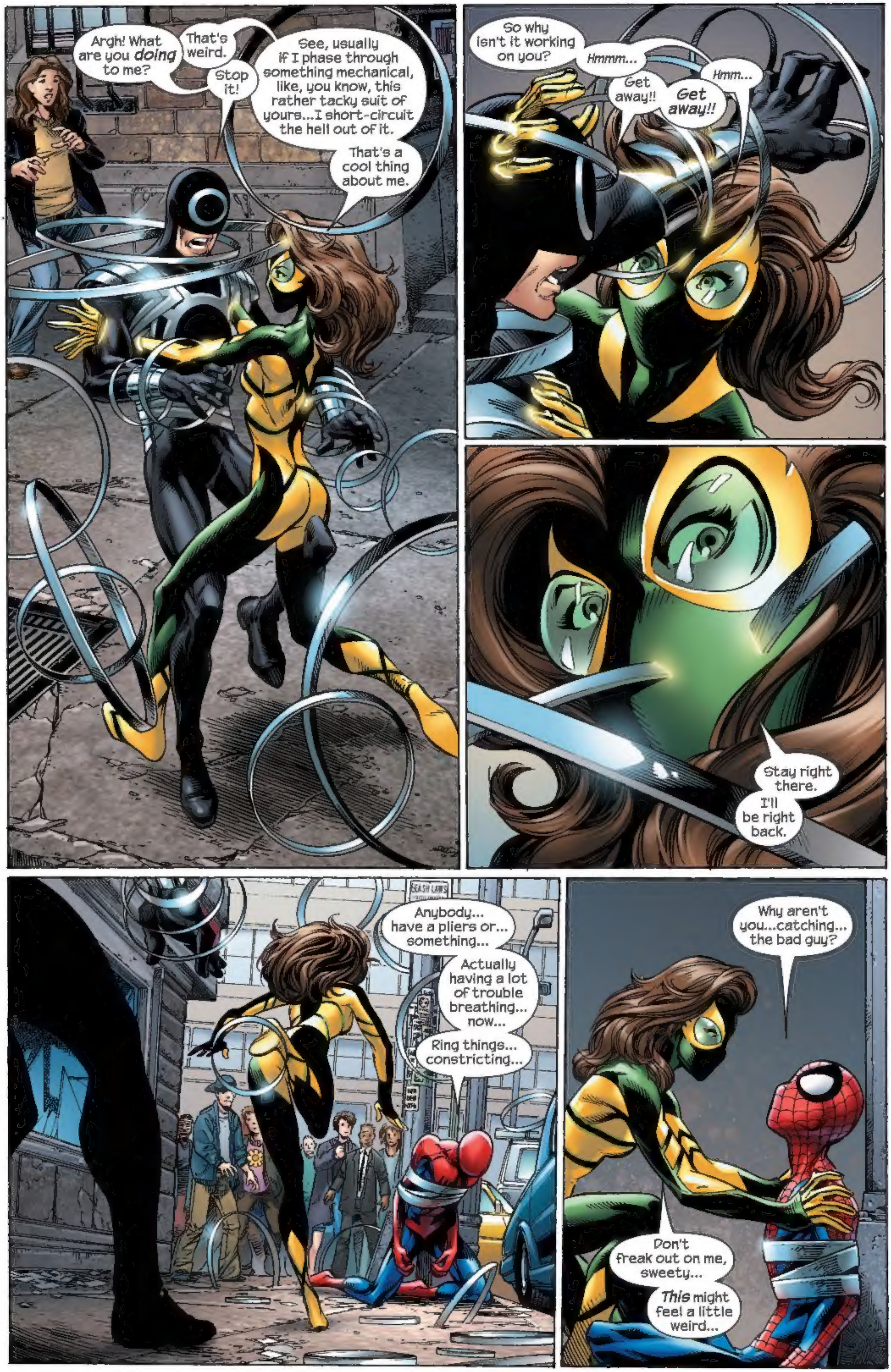
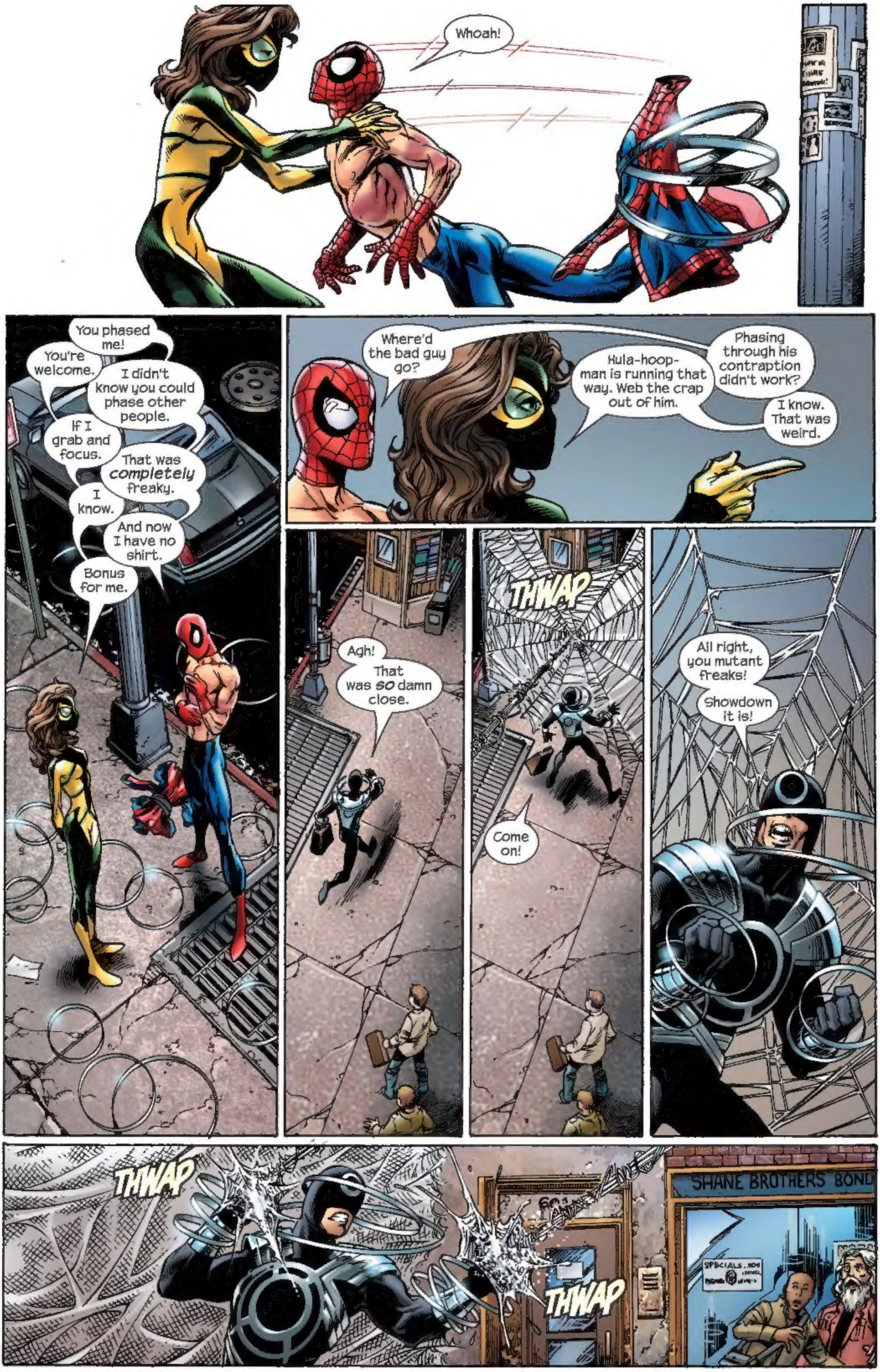
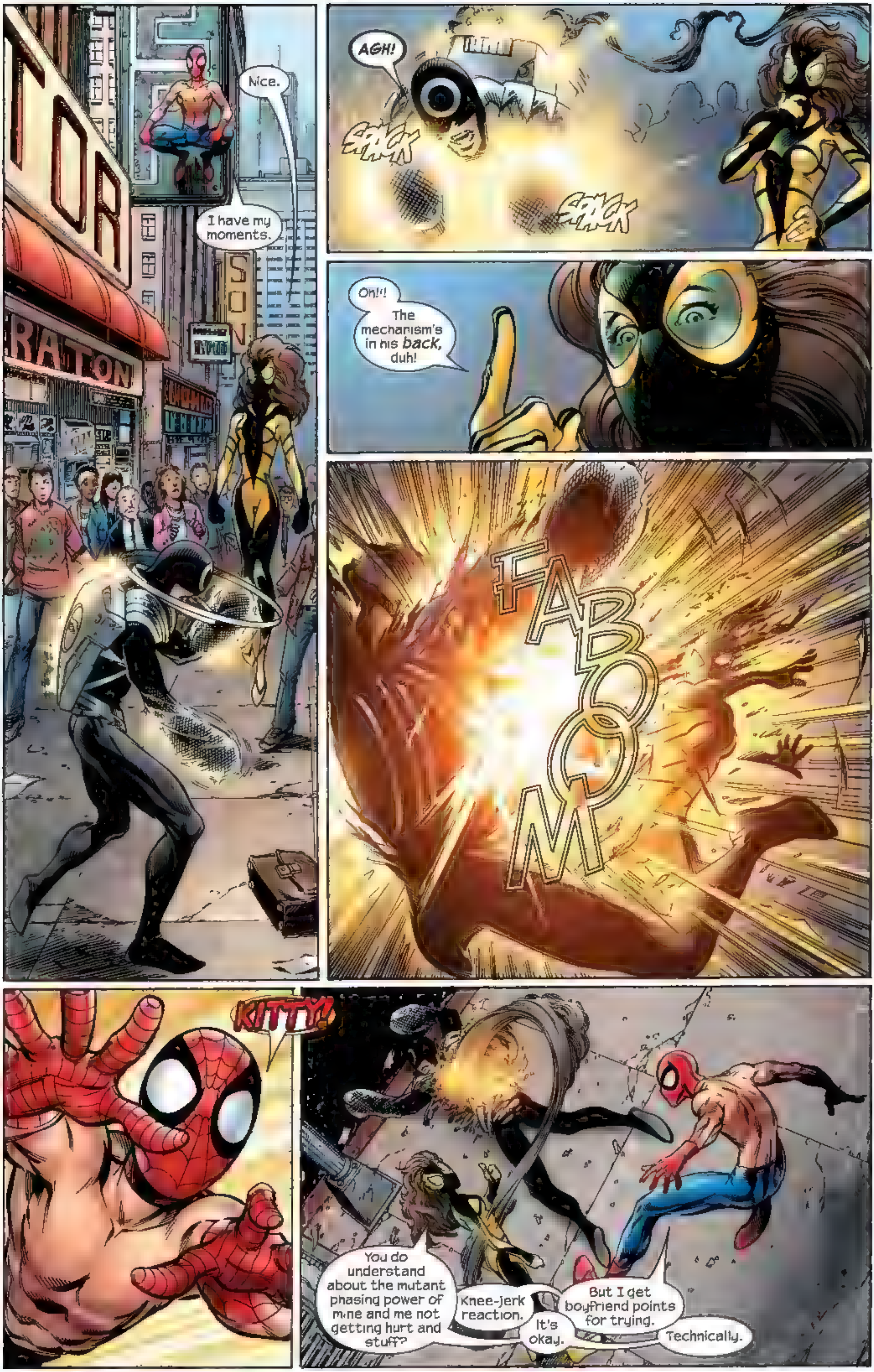

It's going- rrr- to take a lot more than this to embarrass *me* in public!
(Well, not a *lot* more...)

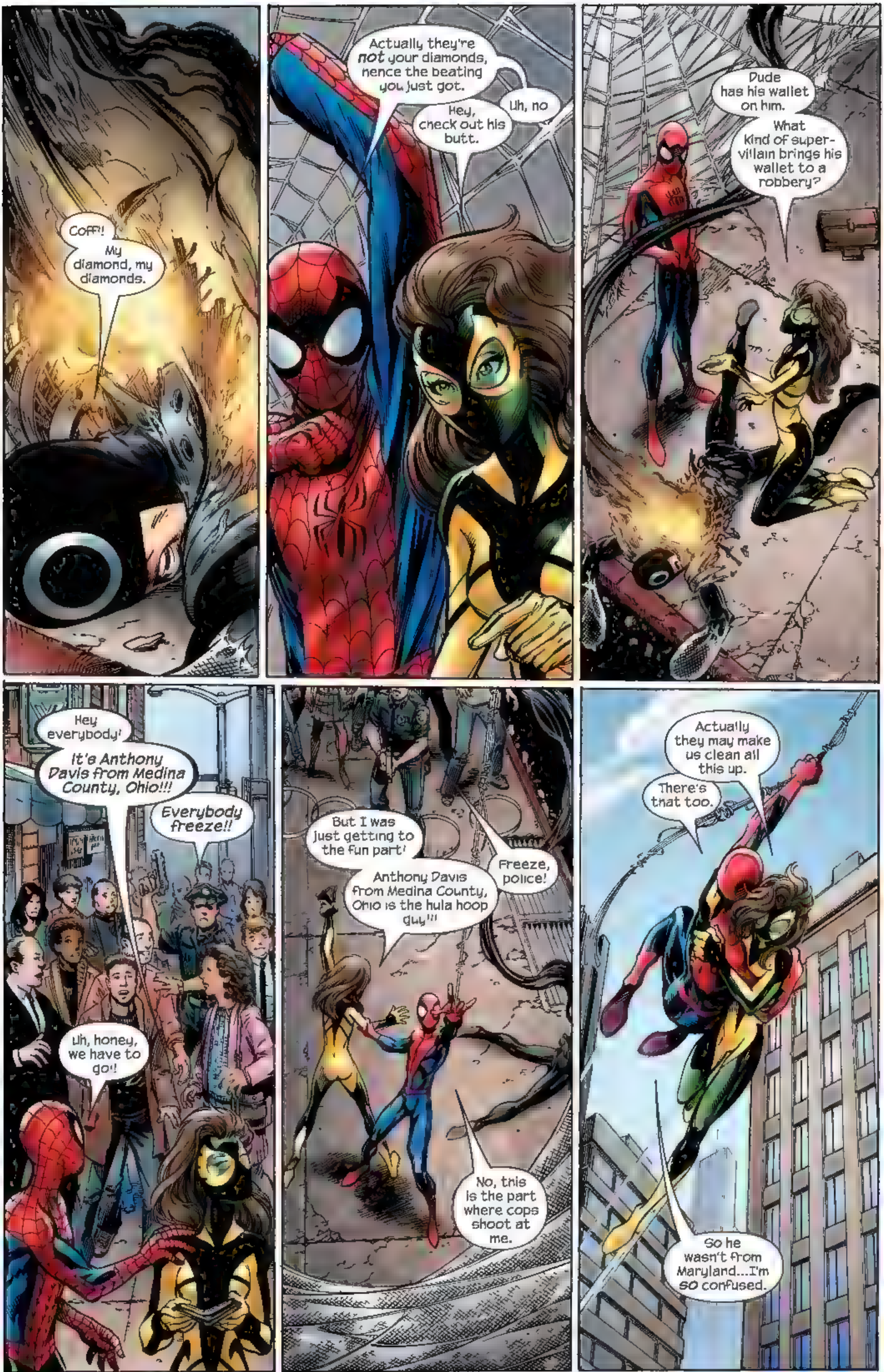

You think I ain't ready fo' a yo like you?!
I'm the *Ringer!!!*
Straight up, I'm from Waldorf, Maryland!!
What? What does that even *mean?*
Am I dreaming?
This seems like it might be a dream.
No more jalapeño cheese popcorn before bed.
You gonna remember *this* face!
You gonna remember who slapped you down like the mutant $%#@ you are!
Slow down with the trash talk! I'm still stuck on that thing about you bragging about being from Maryland.
CRASH
I gotta- did I miss a memo? Did Maryland become cool?
We'll get back to how I'm going to remember your face when you're wearing a mask in a second.
Chuckle it up, mutie!!
I'm takin' my diamonds and you are gonna remember who done this to you!!!
Yeah, uh, You *reeeeeally* should knock it off with the racist crap...

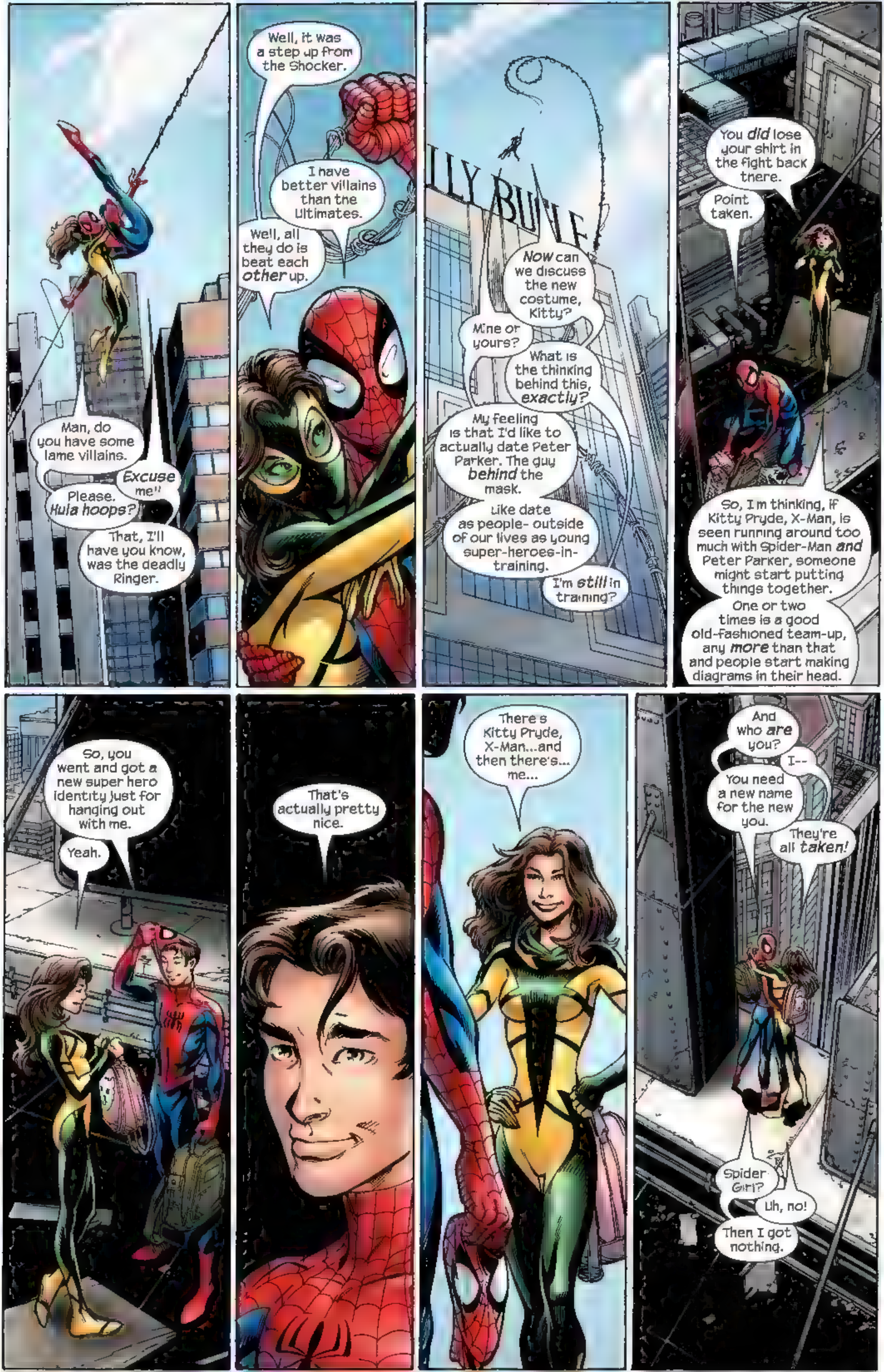

Just sayin'!
WHACK
You okay over there, sweety?
I'll be right there.
I stopped being able to breathe a few minutes ago.
Gonna choke the stupid right out a'ya!
Lotta tough talk from a guy who plays with hula hoops.
And you see how your whole shtick isn't working on me, right?
That means you're in trouble.
Don't!
TIMELY

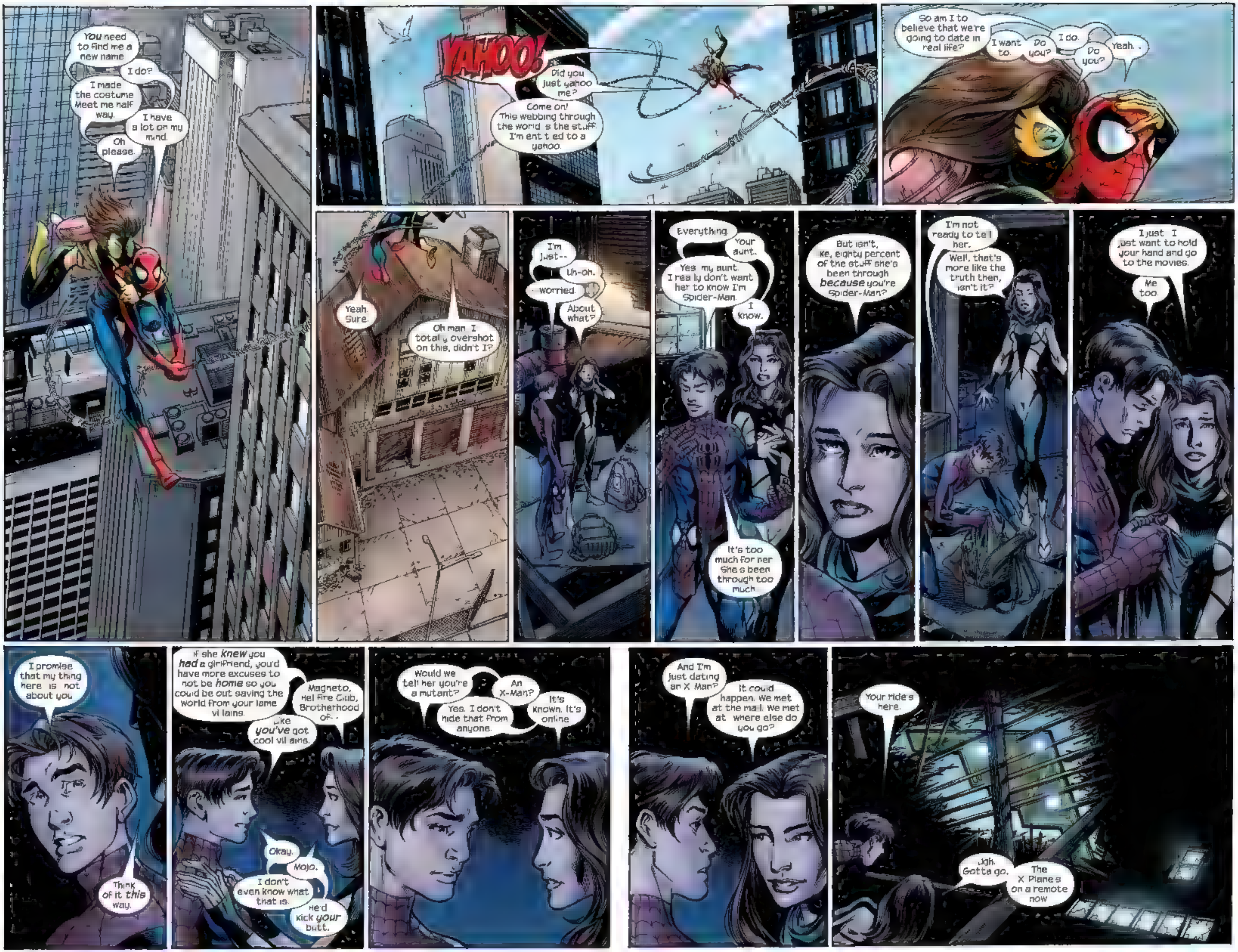

Argh! What are you *doing* to me?
That's weird.
Stop it!
See, usually if I phase through something mechanical, like, you know, this rather tacky suit of yours...I short-circuit the hell out of it.
That's a cool thing about me.
So why isn't it working on you?
Hmmm...
Get away!!
Get away!!
Hmm...
Stay right there.
I'll be right back.
LEASH LAWS
Anybody... have a pliers or... something...
Actually having a lot of trouble breathing... now...
Ring things... constricting...
Why aren't you...catching... the bad guy?
Don't freak out on me, sweety...
This might feel a little weird...

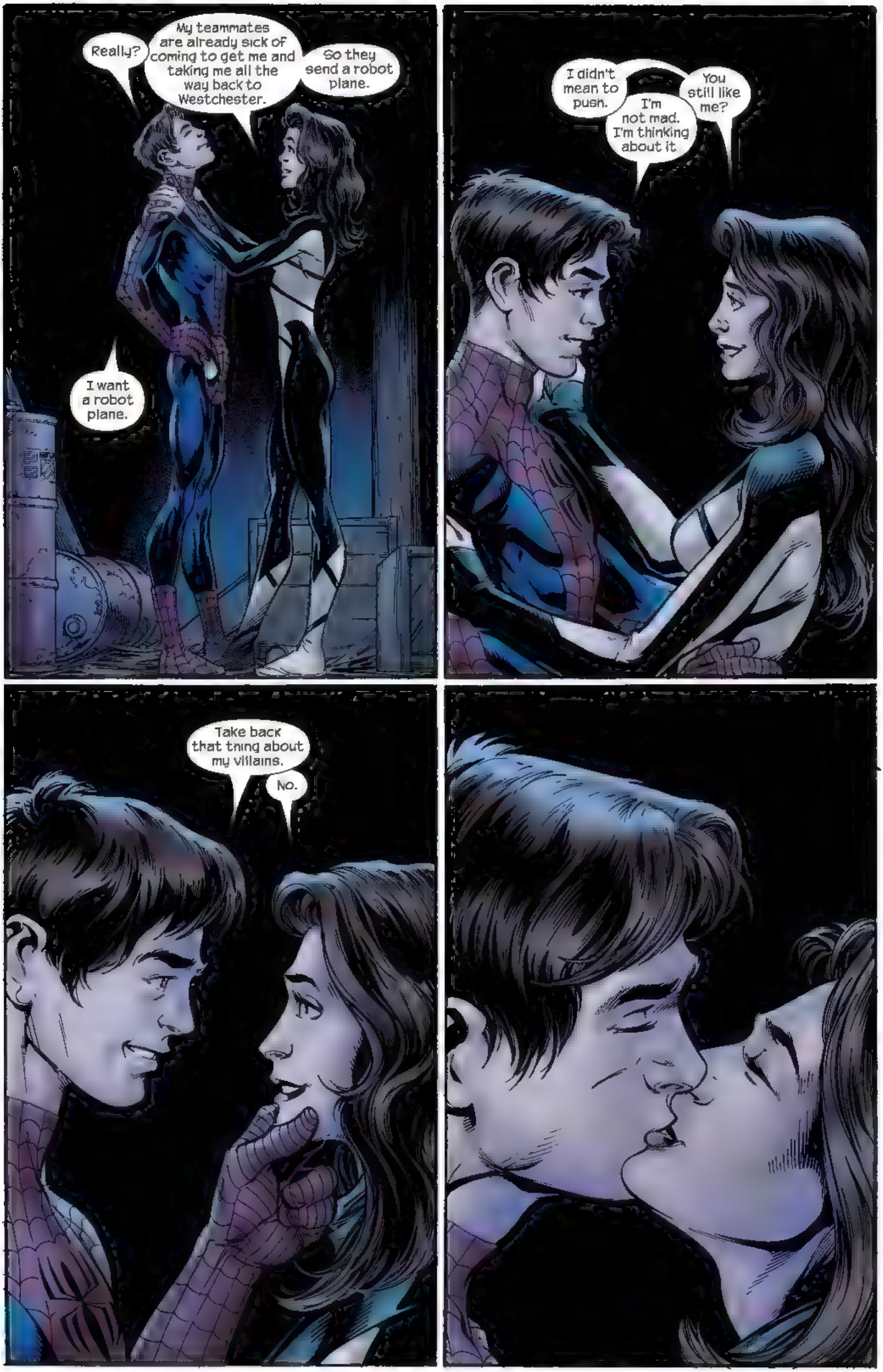

Whoah!
You phased me!
You're welcome.
I didn't know you could phase other people.
If I grab and focus.
That was *completely* freaky.
I know.
And now I have no shirt.
Bonus for me.
Where'd the bad guy go?
Hula-hoop-man is running that way. Web the crap out of him.
Phasing through his contraption didn't work?
I know. That was weird.
Agh! That was *so* damn close.
THWAP
Come on!
All right, you mutant freaks!
Showdown it is!
THWAP
THWAP
SHANE BROTHERS BOND

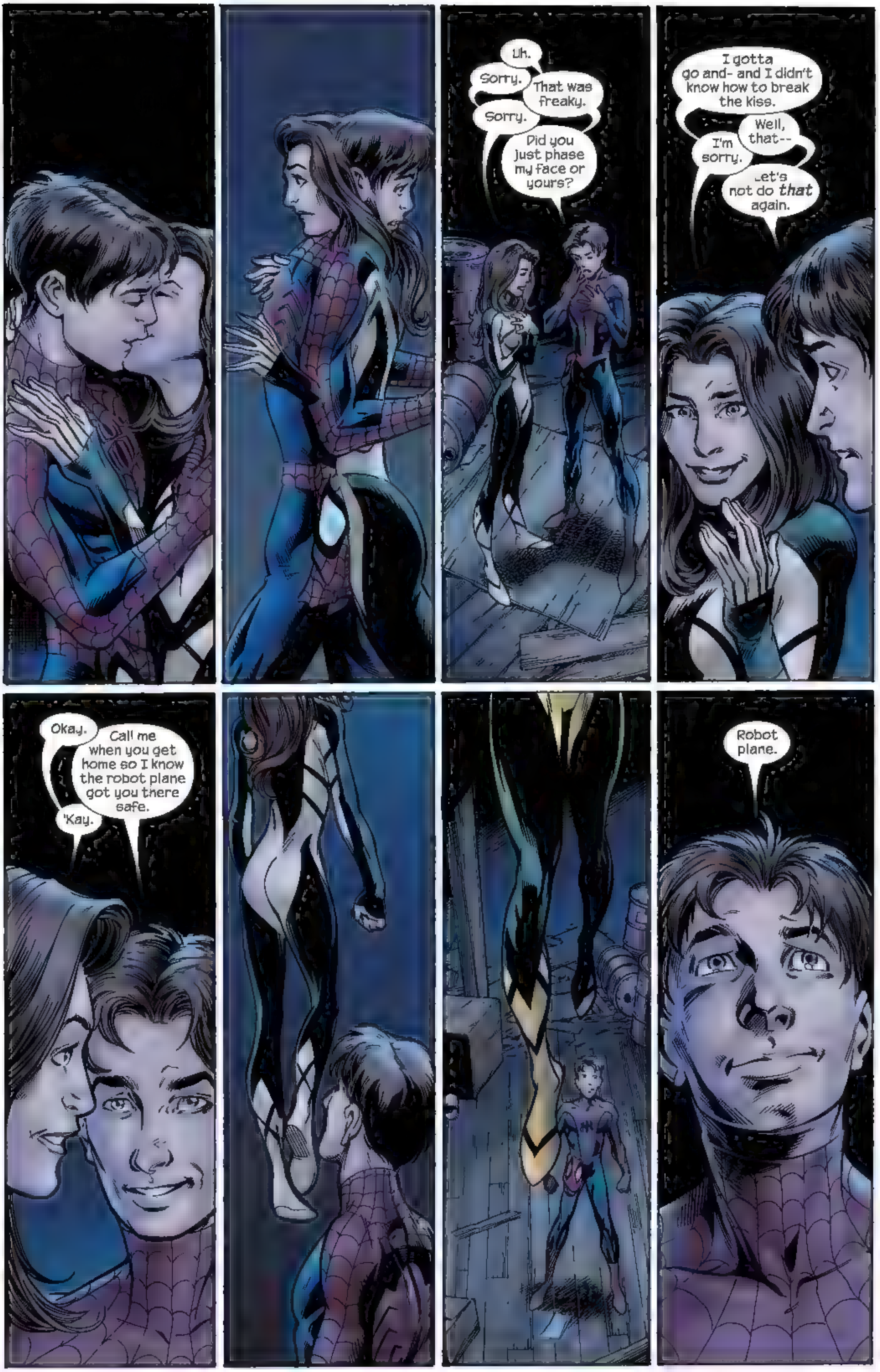

TOR
RATON
SON
Nice.
I have my moments.
AGH!
SPACK
SPACK
Oh!! The mechanism's in his *back*, duh!
FABOOM
KITTY!
You do understand about the mutant phasing power of mine and me not getting hurt and stuff?
Knee-jerk reaction.
It's okay.
But I get boyfriend points for trying.
Technically.

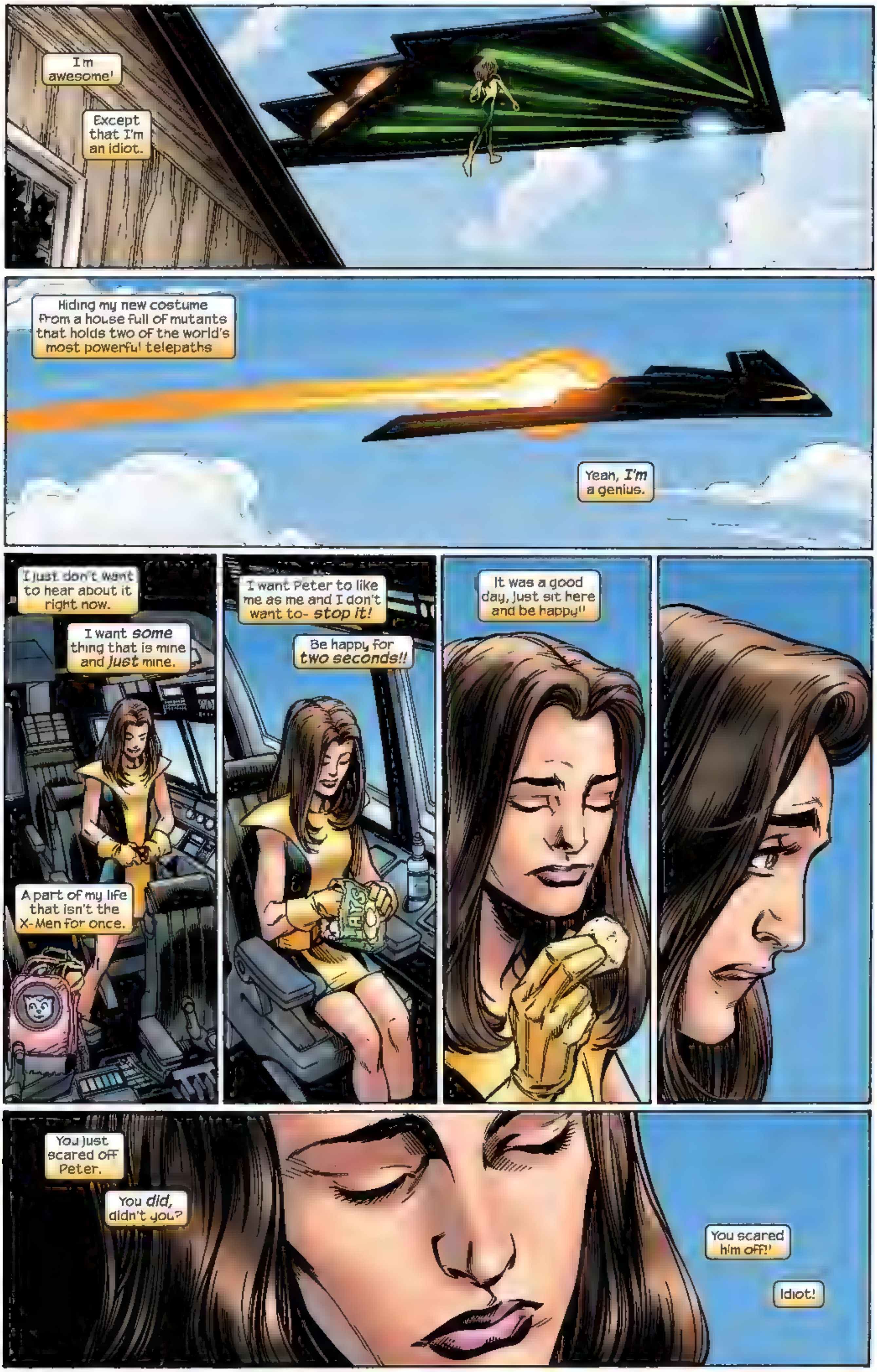

COFF!
My diamond, my diamonds.
Actually they're *not* your diamonds, hence the beating you just got.
Uh, no
Hey, check out his butt.
Dude has his wallet on him.
What kind of super-villain brings his wallet to a robbery?
Hey everybody!
It's Anthony Davis from Medina County, Ohio!!!
Everybody freeze!!
Uh, honey, we have to go!!
But I was just getting to the fun part!
Anthony Davis from Medina County, Ohio is the hula hoop guy!!!
Freeze, police!
No, this is the part where cops shoot at me.
Actually they may make us clean all this up.
There's that too.
So he wasn't from Maryland...I'm *so* confused.

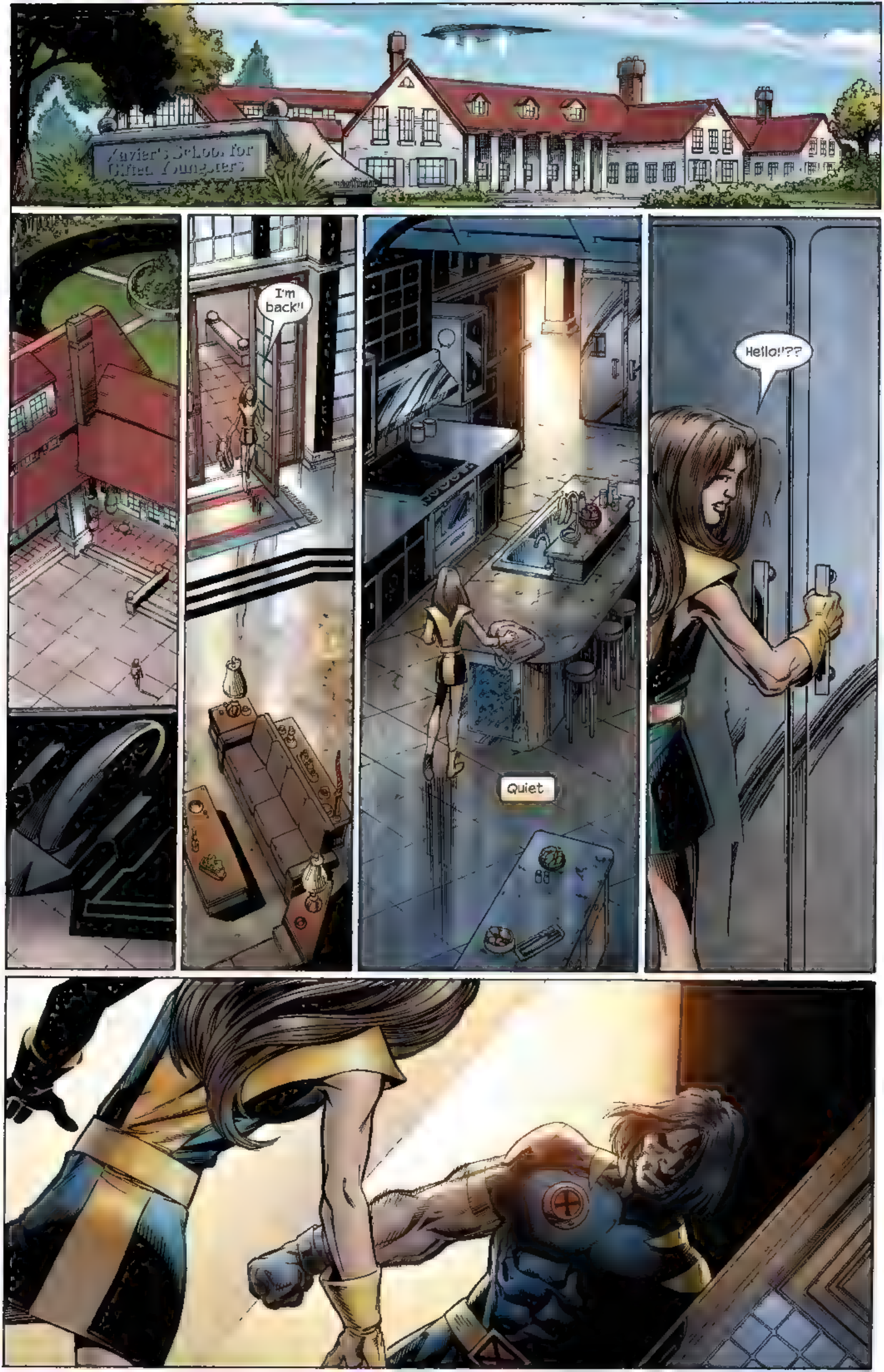

Man, do you have some lame villains.
Excuse me!
Please. *Hula hoops?*
That, I'll have you know, was the deadly Ringer.
Well, it was a step up from the Shocker.
I have better villains than the Ultimates.
Well, all they do is beat each *other* up.
Now can we discuss the new costume, Kitty?
Mine or yours?
What is the thinking behind this, *exactly?*
My feeling is that I'd like to actually date Peter Parker. The guy *behind* the mask.
Like date as people- outside of our lives as young super-heroes-in-training.
I'm *still* in training?
You *did* lose your shirt in the fight back there.
Point taken.
So, I'm thinking, if Kitty Pryde, X-Man, is seen running around too much with Spider-Man *and* Peter Parker, someone might start putting things together.
One or two times is a good old-fashioned team-up, any *more* than that and people start making diagrams in their head.
So, you went and got a new super hero identity just for hanging out with me.
Yeah.
That's actually pretty nice.
There's Kitty Pryde, X-Man...and then there's... me...
And who *are* you?
I--
You need a new name for the new you.
They're all *taken!*
Spider-Girl?
Uh, no!
Then I got nothing.

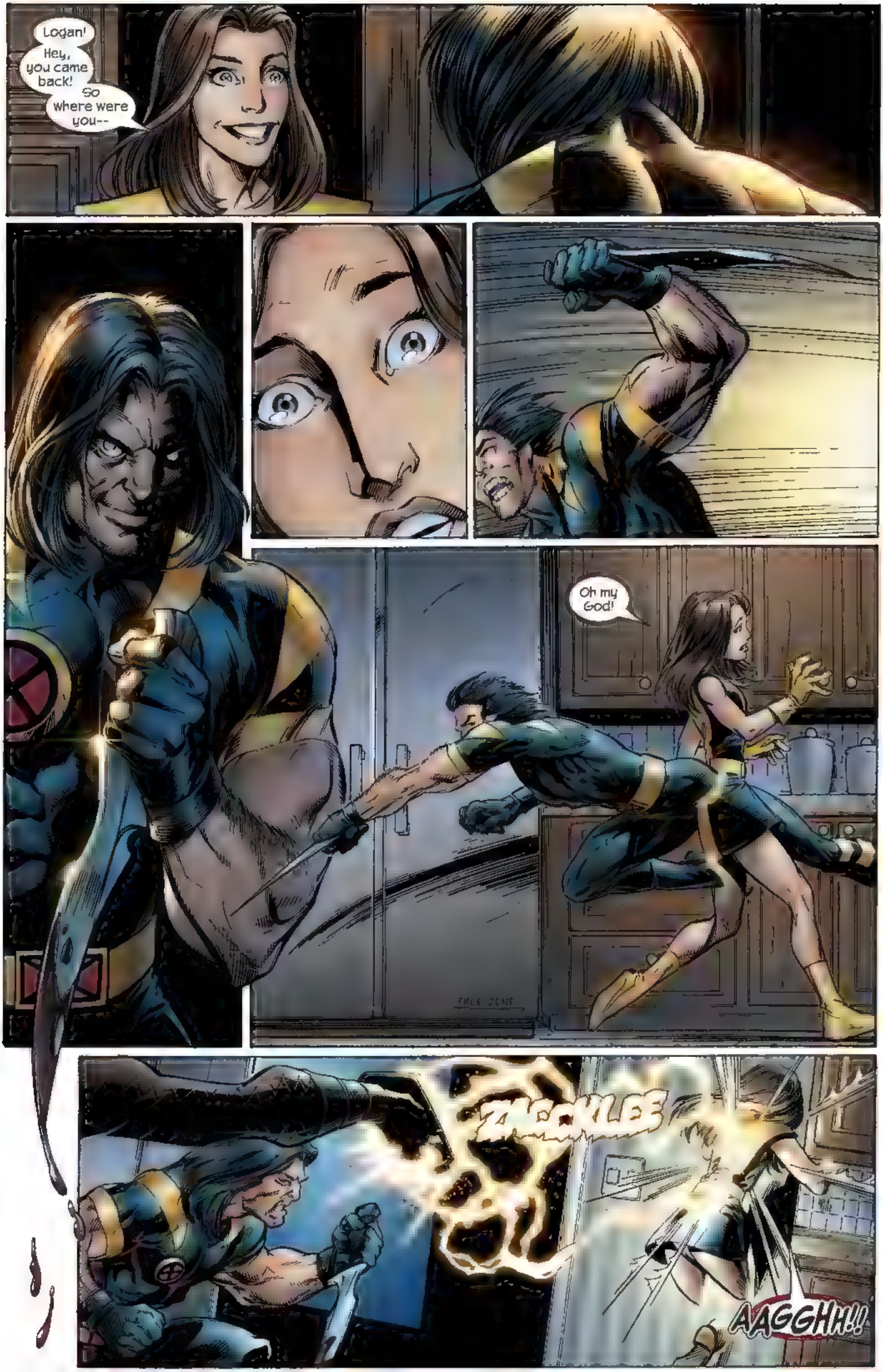

You need to find me a new name.
I do?
I made the costume. Meet me half way.
I have a lot on my mind.
Oh please.
YAHOO!
Did you just yahoo me?
Come on! This webbing through the world's the stuff. I'm entitled to a yahoo.
So am I to believe that we're going to date in real life?
I want to.
Do you?
I do.
Do you?
Yeah.
Oh man. I totally overshot on this, didn't I?
Yeah. Sure.
I'm just--
Uh-oh.
Worried.
About what?
Everything.
Your aunt.
Yes, my aunt. I really don't want her to know I'm Spider-Man.
I know.
It's too much for her. She's been through too much.
But isn't, like, eighty percent of the stuff she's been through because you're Spider-Man?
I'm not ready to tell her.
Well, that's more like the truth then, isn't it?
I just... I just want to hold your hand and go to the movies.
Me too.
I promise that my thing here is not about you.
Think of it this way.
If she knew you had a girlfriend, you'd have more excuses to not be home so you could be out saving the world from your lame villains.
Magneto, Hellfire Club, Brotherhood of--
Like you've got cool villains.
Okay.
Mojo.
I don't even know what that is.
He'd kick your butt.
Would we tell her you're a mutant?
An X-Man?
Yes. I don't hide that from anyone.
It's known. It's online.
And I'm just dating an X-Man?
It could happen. We met at the mall. We met at... where else do you go?
Your ride's here.
Ugh. Gotta go.
The X-Plane's on a remote now.

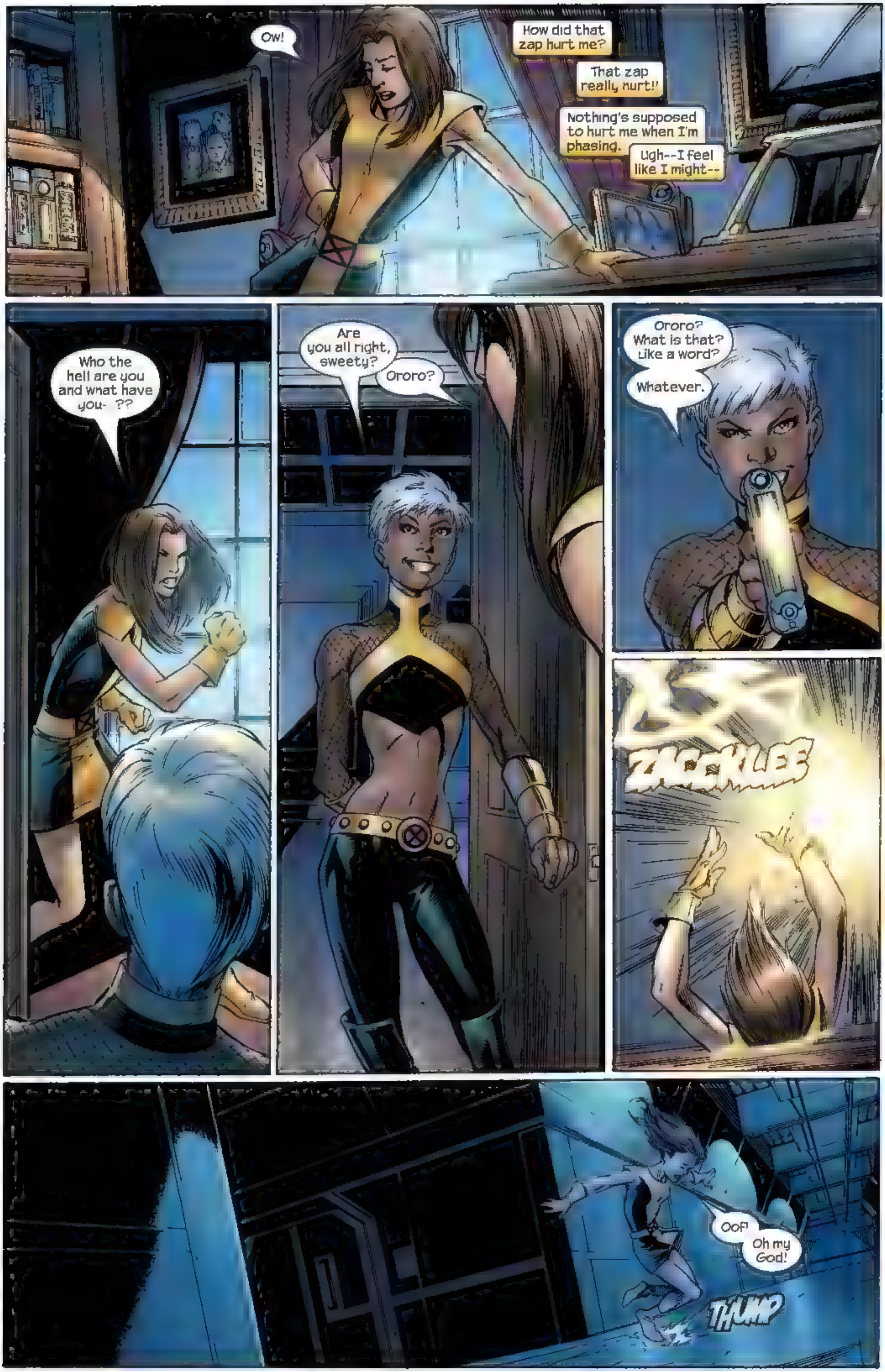

Really?
My teammates are already sick of coming to get me and taking me all the way back to Westchester.
So they send a robot plane.
I want a robot plane.
I didn't mean to push.
I'm not mad. I'm thinking about it
You still like me?
Take back that thing about my villains.
No.

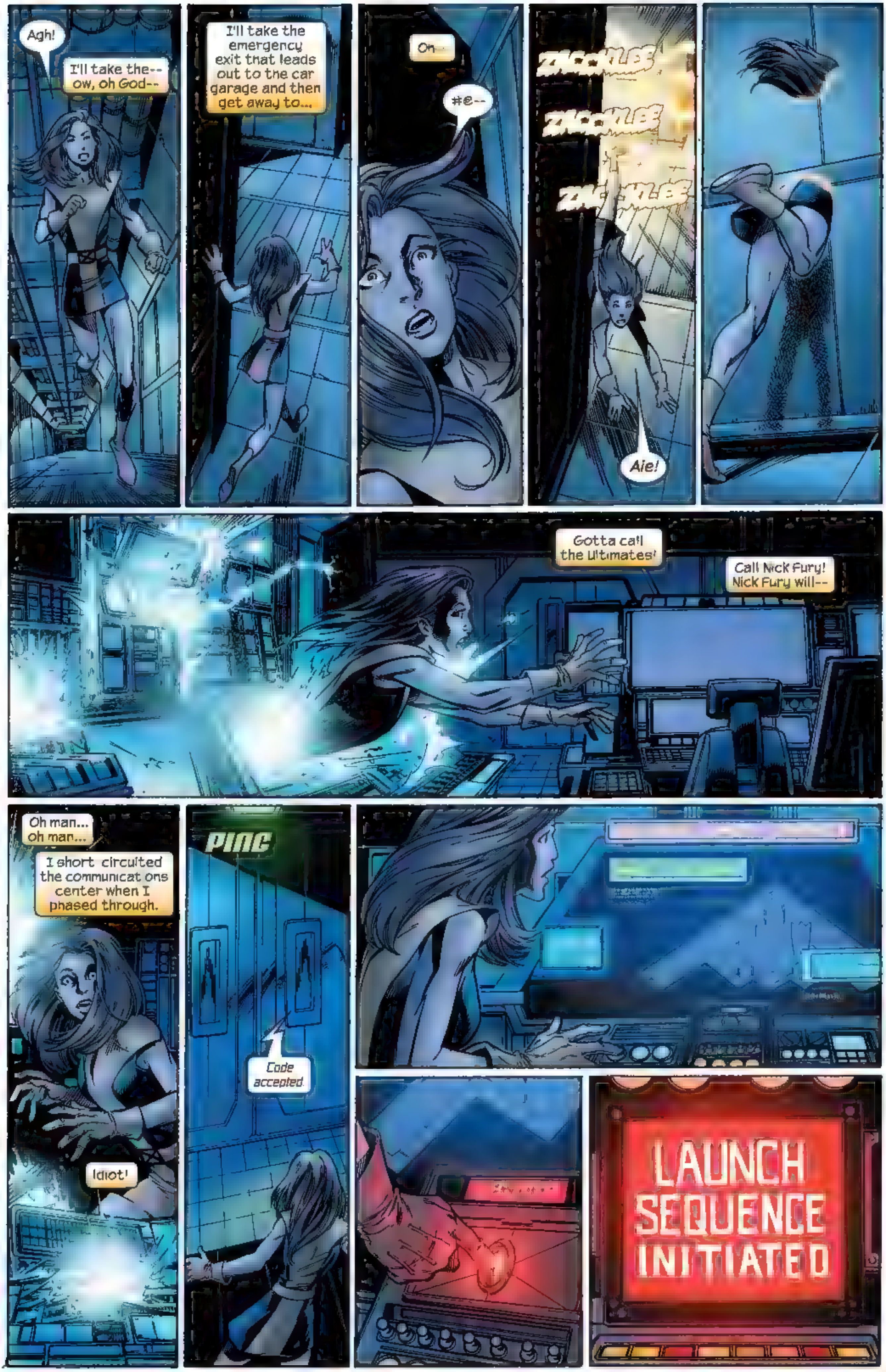

Uh.
Sorry.
That was freaky.
Sorry.
Did you just phase my face or yours?
I gotta go and- and I didn't know how to break the kiss.
Well, that--
I'm sorry.
Let's not do *that* again.
Okay.
Call me when you get home so I know the robot plane got you there safe.
'Kay.
Robot plane.

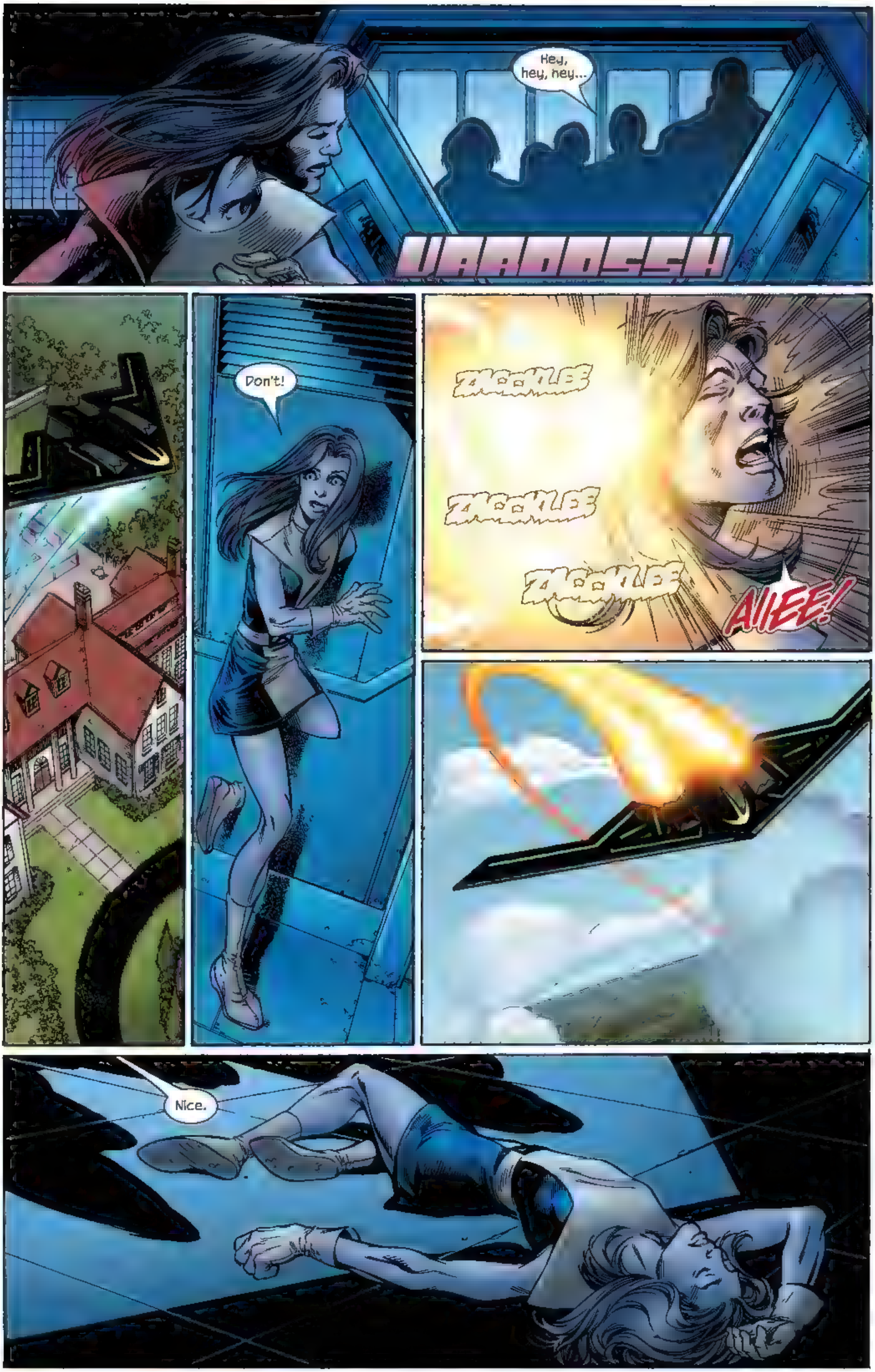

I'm awesome!
Except that I'm an idiot.
Hiding my new costume from a house full of mutants that holds two of the world's most powerful telepaths
Yeah, *I'm* a genius.
I just don't want to hear about it right now.
I want *some* thing that is mine and *just* mine.
A part of my life that isn't the X-Men for once.
I want Peter to like me as me and I don't want to- *stop it!*
Be happy for *two seconds!!*
LAYS
It was a good day, just sit here and be happy!!
You just scared off Peter.
You *did,* didn't you?
You scared him off!!
Idiot!

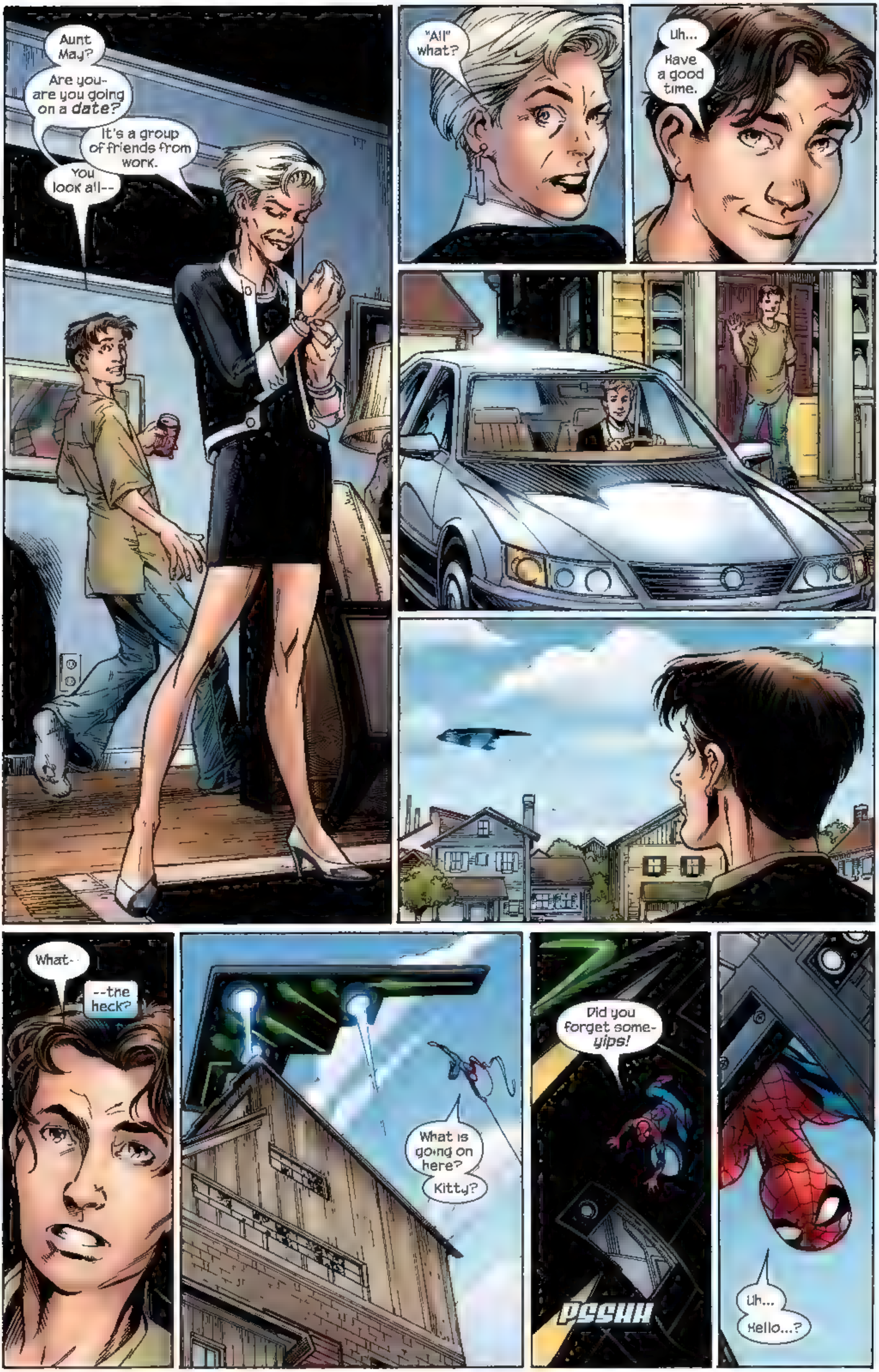

Xavier's School for Gifted Youngsters
I'm back!!
Quiet
Hello!??

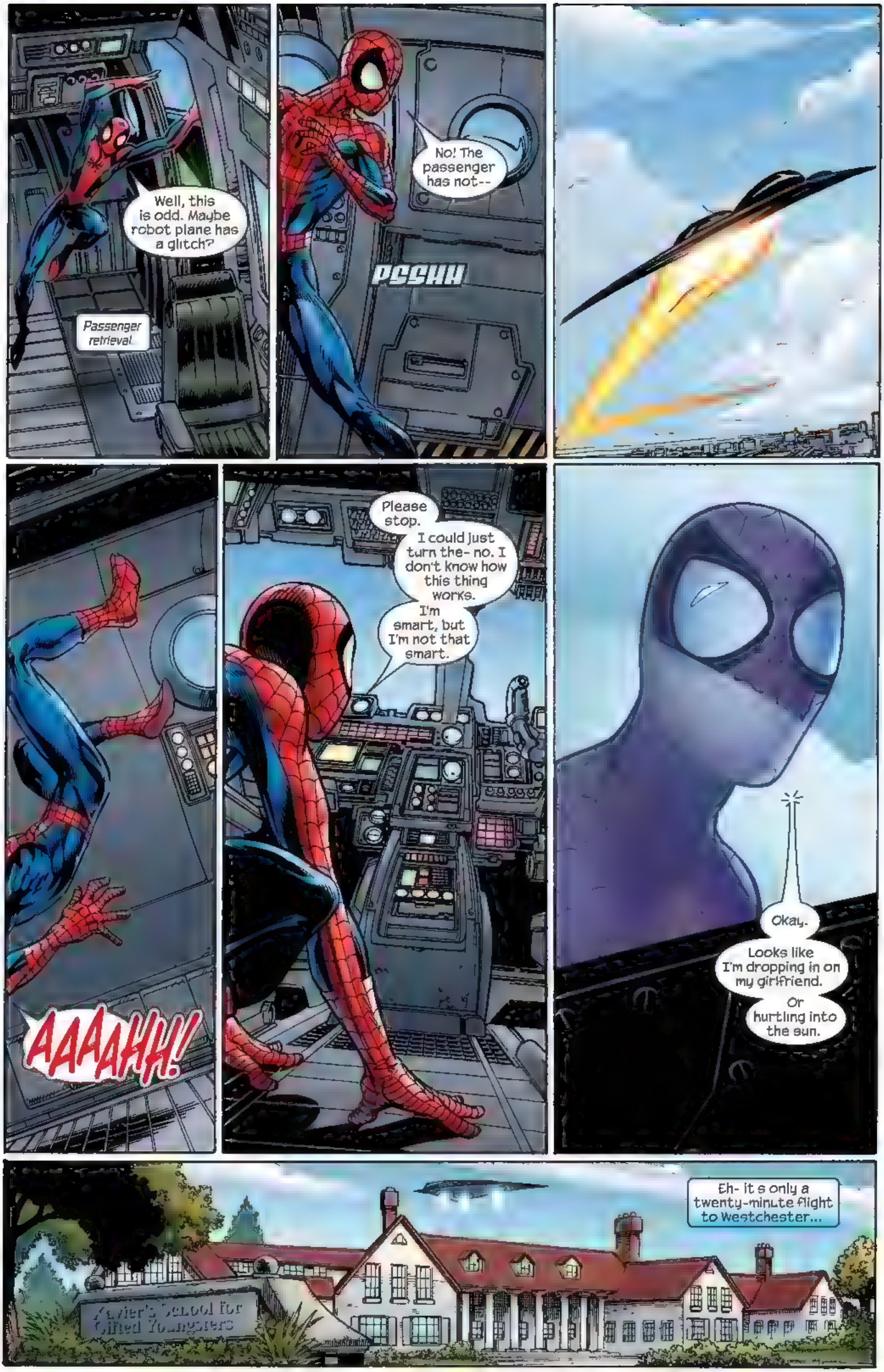

Logan!
Hey, you came back!
So where were you--
Oh my God!
FREE ZONE
ZACKLEE
AAGGHH!!

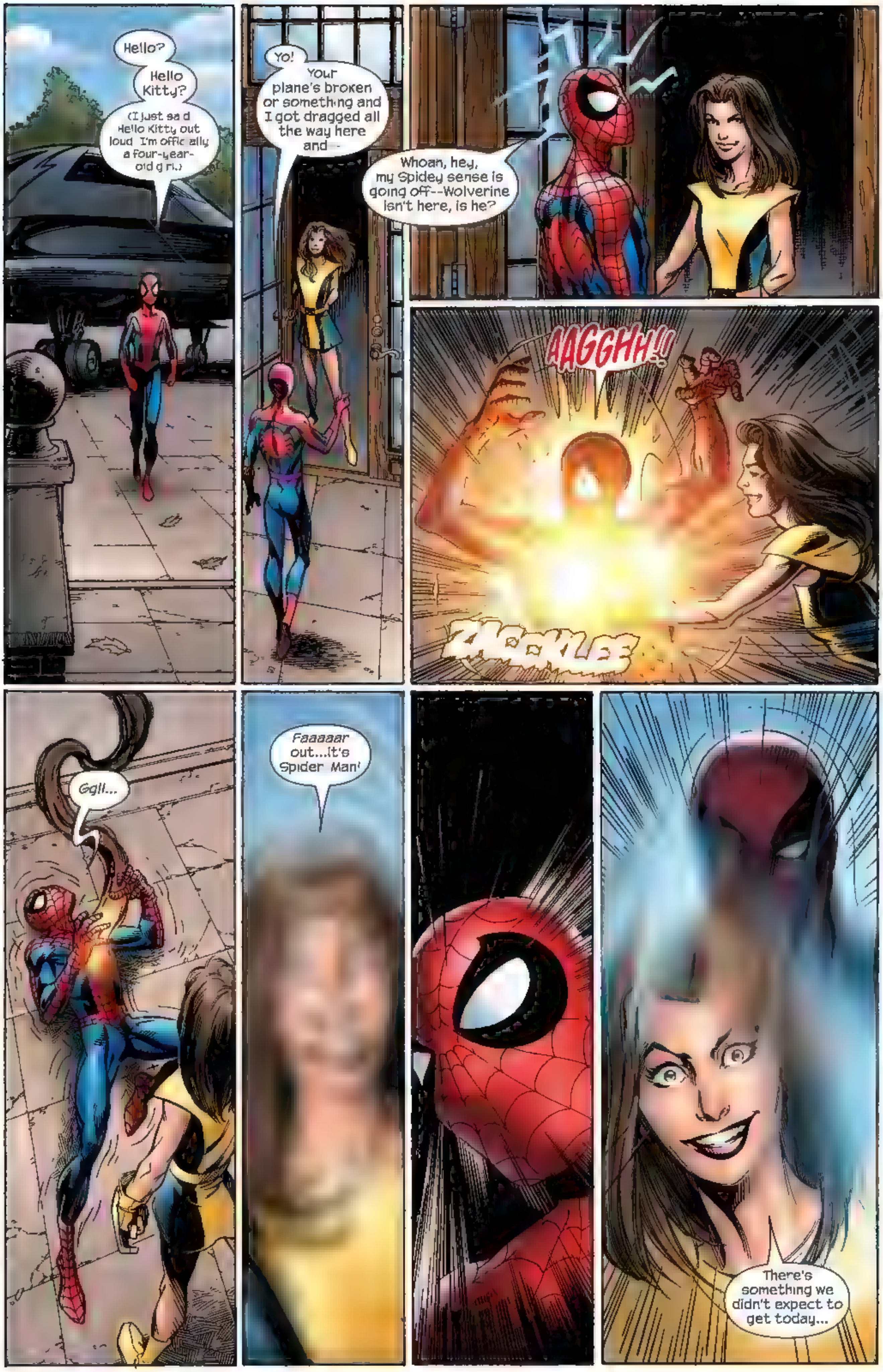

Ow!
How did that zap hurt me?
That zap really hurt!!
Nothing's supposed to hurt me when I'm phasing.
Ugh--I feel like I might--
Who the hell are you and what have you- ??
Are you all right, sweety?
Ororo?
Ororo? What is that? Like a word?
Whatever.
ZACKLEE
Oof!
Oh my God!
THUMP

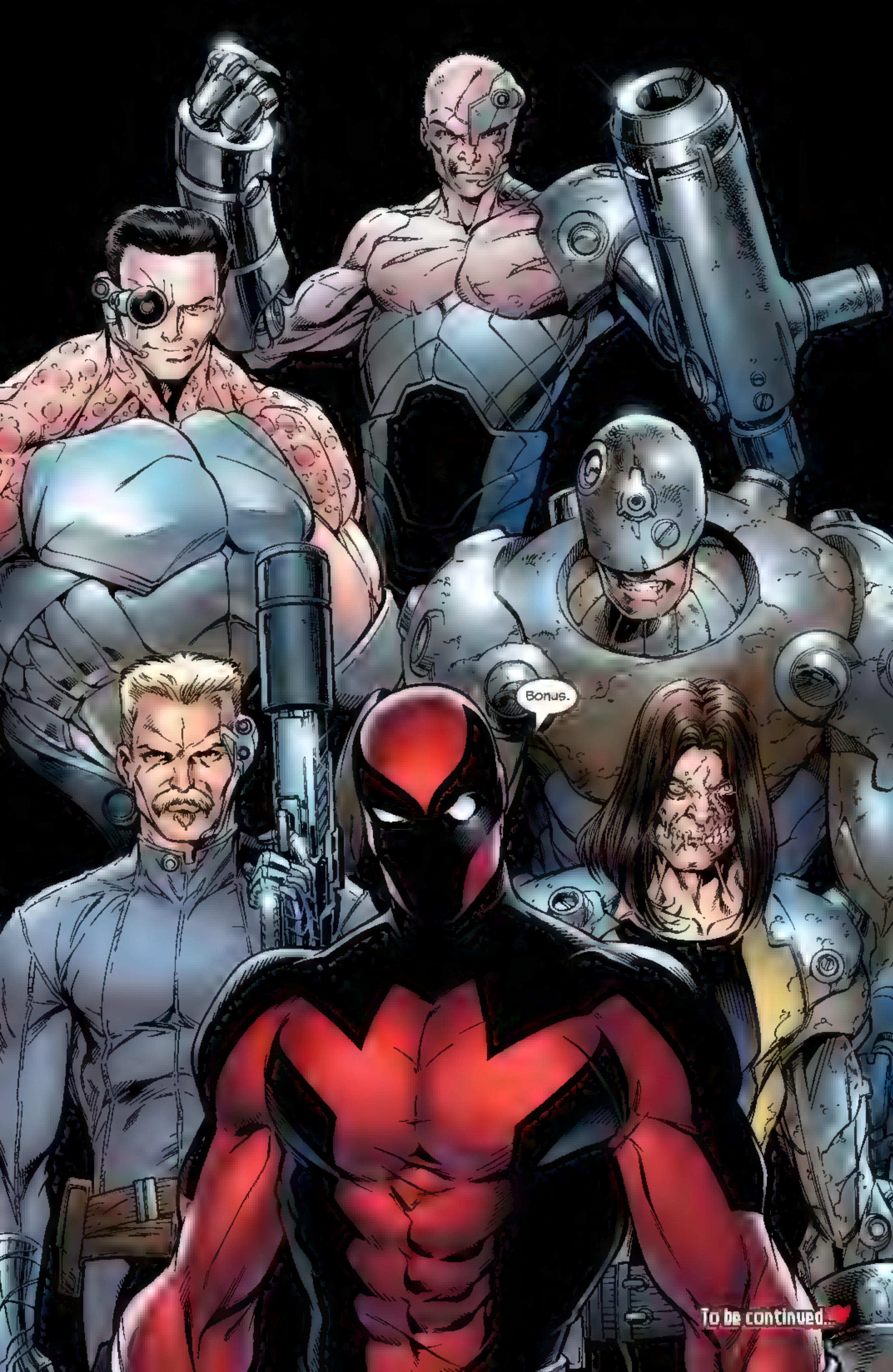

Agh!
I'll take the-- ow, oh God--
I'll take the emergency exit that leads out to the car garage and then get away to...
On--
#@--
ZACKLE
ZACKLE
ZACKLE
Aie!
Gotta call the Ultimates!
Call Nick Fury! Nick Fury will--
Oh man... oh man...
I short circuited the communications center when I phased through.
Idiot!
PING
Code accepted.
LAUNCH SEQUENCE INITIATED


Hey, hey, hey...
VAROOSSH
Don't!
ZACCKLEE
ZACCKLEE
ZACCKLEE
AIIEE!
Nice.


Aunt May?
Are you- are you going on a *date*?
It's a group of friends from work.
You look all--
"All" what?
Uh...
Have a good time.
What--
--the heck?
What is going on here?
Kitty?
Did you forget some- *yips!*
PSSHH
Uh...
Hello...?


Well, this is odd. Maybe robot plane has a glitch?
Passenger retrieval.
No! The passenger has not--
PSSHH
AAAAHH!
Please stop.
I could just turn the- no. I don't know how this thing works.
I'm smart, but I'm not that smart.
Okay.
Looks like I'm dropping in on my girlfriend.
Or hurtling into the sun.
Eh- it's only a twenty-minute flight to Westchester...
Xavier's School for Gifted Youngsters


Hello?
Hello Kitty?
(I just said Hello Kitty out loud. I'm officially a four-year-old girl.)
Yo! Your plane's broken or something and I got dragged all the way here and--
Whoan, hey, my Spidey sense is going off--Wolverine isn't here, is he?
AAGGHH!!
ZAKKLE
Ggll...
Faaaaar out...it's Spider Man!
There's something we didn't expect to get today...


Bonus.
To be continued...

ULTIMATE SPIDER-MAN

Dear Karate Kid,

It occurs to me (after reading the *Ultimate Spider-Man Annual*) that in the past MJ has always been there to sew up Peter's ragged costume whenever it got messed up. Now that Parker has a new girlfriend, and his relationship with MJ is somewhat on the fence, I can't help but wonder: *who will sew up Spidey's costume now???* If Peter's suit were to get ripped now, would he have to go crawling back to MJ to fix it? Could Kitty fix it or would she maybe get Peter the hookup on the X-Men's mysterious uniform outlet store?

Maybe we could even have a design contest!!!

Nekolas Martin
South Boston, VA

Looks like Peter might have to learn himself some sewin'...it's about time, too. And "Karate Kid"? Ralph's never heard *that* one before....

Dear *Ultimate Spidey* Team,

I just love *Ultimate Spider-Man*. I have been a long time fan of Spider-Man for the past 25 years and this is the first time I've written to Marvel since I was a kid. Yes, I'm in my early thirties and I still read comics! It might not be a big thing over there in the U.S., but it is in the Middle East. I am from Egypt but I have lived most of my life in the Gulf (Dubai to be exact).

People here think that Comics are for 10 year old kids, however I have been able to convert several of these folks into true believers thanks to *Ultimate Spider-Man's* awesome writing and art. Even my wife is hooked on *Spidey* now.

I hope you can answer a few questions for me, please:

1. We just finished watching the first season of the 3D *Spider-Man* animated series on DVD. It was amazing, especially since Mr. Bendis was involved, and we are thirsty for more. When can we expect to see season 2?

2. My wife wants to get me the *USM* video game, and I have noticed that Venom has the white-spider logo on him—which he did not have in the *USM* books. Does this mean that the game's storyline arc is different than the book?

3. Are there any chances for dead characters being brought back to life, or are they dead for good in the Ultimate Universe?

Until I convert everyone over here into Spidey Fans, Make Mine Marvel!

Sincerely Yours,
Onsy "Scorpy" Al Hagrassy
Dubai, U.A.E.

Thanks for writing, Scorpy! Useless answers, in order:

1. We're not really privy to all the wheelings-and-dealings in Hollywood, but we'd sure love to see more of Spidey's animated adventures, too!

2. Hmm...I wonder what Venom will look like if he were to reappear in the comics, eh? You get what I'm saying here? *If* he were to reappear sometime...?

3. Well, anything is possible in comics...isn't it?

Dear *Ultimate Spider-Man* team,

You guys have done an excellent job with the *USM* series. I especially want to commend you on the great job you all did with *Ultimate Spider-Man* # 89. I believe that was the best comic that I've ever read (and I've read quite a few comics in my day). The artwork was great, the writing and the story were fantastic. Great job, guys! Keep up the good work!

Sincerely,
Philip Tallman

Succinct and to-the-point, Philip! You've done an excellent job with your letter-writing!

Dear *Ultimate Spider-Man* team,

Never since the Romita Sr. days of *Amazing Spider-Man* have I anticipated the next issue of any Spidey mag—except this one. Long may the quality of art and writing continue to astound me.

Stuart West
United Kingdom

Even more succinct! And we'll do our best, Stuart!

Dear *USM* team,

How long before a story arc is thought up before it is actually made into the comics? If an arc overlaps into another series, how long before the effects are accounted for in the other series?

Xalibar

The gestation time for a story arc can be years or months—sometimes even weeks! For *USM*, Mark always keeps a couple issues ahead and Brian's got scripts finished through the next story arc (with detailed plans even further). Some story ideas have been floating around since issue one, and other ideas are spur-of-the-moment.

It's always tricky to keep the world coherent between different series without ruining every comic's regular stories. We do our best, but sometimes things can get confusing.

I think the most obvious example would be the current arc in *Ultimates 2*—clearly this story has massive ramifications, and we don't plan to ignore that...but we also don't want to compromise the stories in the other Ultimate books by forcing them to take place while America is under siege...*and* we don't want to have those series take place *after Ultimates 2*, thereby showing how it ends...so, for the time being, *Ultimates 2* is taking place slightly in the future. We'll catch up, and everything will even out eventually. It's like that with every arc of every series, and we make strenuous efforts to keep everything logical...

Maybe it would be worth printing a timeline of recent Ultimate history? What do you guys (and girls) think?

Ultimate Spider-Man Letter Page,

I've been reading the "Silver Sable" arc and so far it's been pretty good, but what really kept me reading was that I heard about an appearance by the Ultimate Vulture—and I have to say when I got to the last page of *USM* #89, I was happy. The Ultimate version of Vulture is really cool looking, like the original, but a little more high-tech.

I've been reading *USM* for a while, and most of the stories have been good, but I really like the stories when some classic villains get Ultimized. Keep up the Ultimate work!

Alec Berry

We'll do our best!

Dear Marvel,

I never fail to be *totally* fascinated at how talented you people are! *USM* #89 was *another* great read! I *really* like Silver Sable and hope to see her again in this book soon. I also think that she could hold a series of her own! I would definitely subscribe to it.

I also hope to see more of Mary Jane soon; I really felt her pain in this current story. Marvel has the *best* writers and artists of *any* comics company out there! Looking forward to many more years of being stunned at this masterpiece of a series!

Mark H.

Thanks a lot, Mark! I hope you've been following the Marvel Universe Silver Sable in her 4-issue limited series, *Sable & Fortune*, where she's teamed with fast-talking private eye Dominic Fortune!

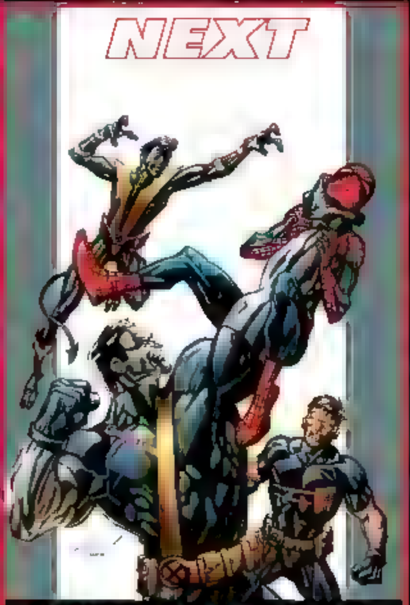
Dear Marvel,

This is the first letter I have ever sent, and I just read #89 of *USM*, and I have to say, *it rocked!* I have been an Ultimate Marvel fan since 2004 (yes, I know, I got a seriously late start) but I have since then made up for lost time. And I do say, the Ultimate line is awesome.

Mr. Bendis, you're a damn good writer, keep up the good work! And I loved the cover to issue #89. About time Ultimate Vulture came into the picture! Can't wait to read the future issues.

Jacob Silvers
Warren, OH

We're glad you joined us, Jacob!



Who is—what is—Deadpool!?! And what does he plan to do with Spidey and Kitty? Here's a hint: "Kill them." Be here next issue, when Peter wakes up in... Krakoa!? That's "Deadpool," part 2!

CAROLINE McGRAW
SPECIAL THANKS

NICOLE WILEY BOOSE
ASSISTANT EDITOR

JOHN BARBER
ASSOCIATE EDITOR

RALPH MACCHIO
EDITOR

JOE QUESADA
CHIEF

ULTIMATE SPIDER-MAN
c/o MARVEL COMICS
417 5TH AVE., NEW YORK, NY 10016
If you don't want your name and address printed, please let us know. Letters may be edited for content and length.

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ULTIMATE SPIDER-MAN®

ISSUE 92

DEADPOOL: PART 2

BENDIS
BAGLEY
DELL

MARVEL

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PREVIOUSLY IN ULTIMATE SPIDER-MAN...

The bite of a genetically-altered spider granted high school student Peter Parker incredible, arachnid-like powers! When a burglar killed his beloved Uncle Ben, a grief-stricken Peter vowed to use his amazing abilities to protect his fellow man. He learned the invaluable lesson that with great power must also come great responsibility...

Having recently broken up with his girlfriend, Mary Jane, Peter started dating Kitty Pryde, member of the super-powered mutant team, the X-Men. After a crime-fighting date, Peter prepares himself for a quiet night at home–when the X-Men's jet arrives, hovering over his doorstep...with no one inside.

Peter dons his Spider-Man costume and investigates, but the craft flies (on autopilot) to the X-Mansion. Kitty is waiting for him–with an electric stun-gun that knocks him out! "Kitty" seems to change shape, revealing himself as a red-and-black-suited man who leads a team of cyborgs...and they all seem to have nefarious plans for our young hero...

DEADPOOL

PART 2 of 4

Brian Michael Bendis WRITER
Mark Bagley PENCILER
John Dell w/ Mark McKenna INKER
Laura Martin & Richard Isanove COLORISTS
VC's Cory Petit LETTERER
Omar Otieku PRODUCTION
Nicole Boose ASST. EDITOR
John Barber ASSOC. EDITOR
Ralph Macchio EDITOR
Joe Quesada EDITOR IN CHIEF
Dan Buckley PUBLISHER

Cover: Mark Bagley & Richard Isanove

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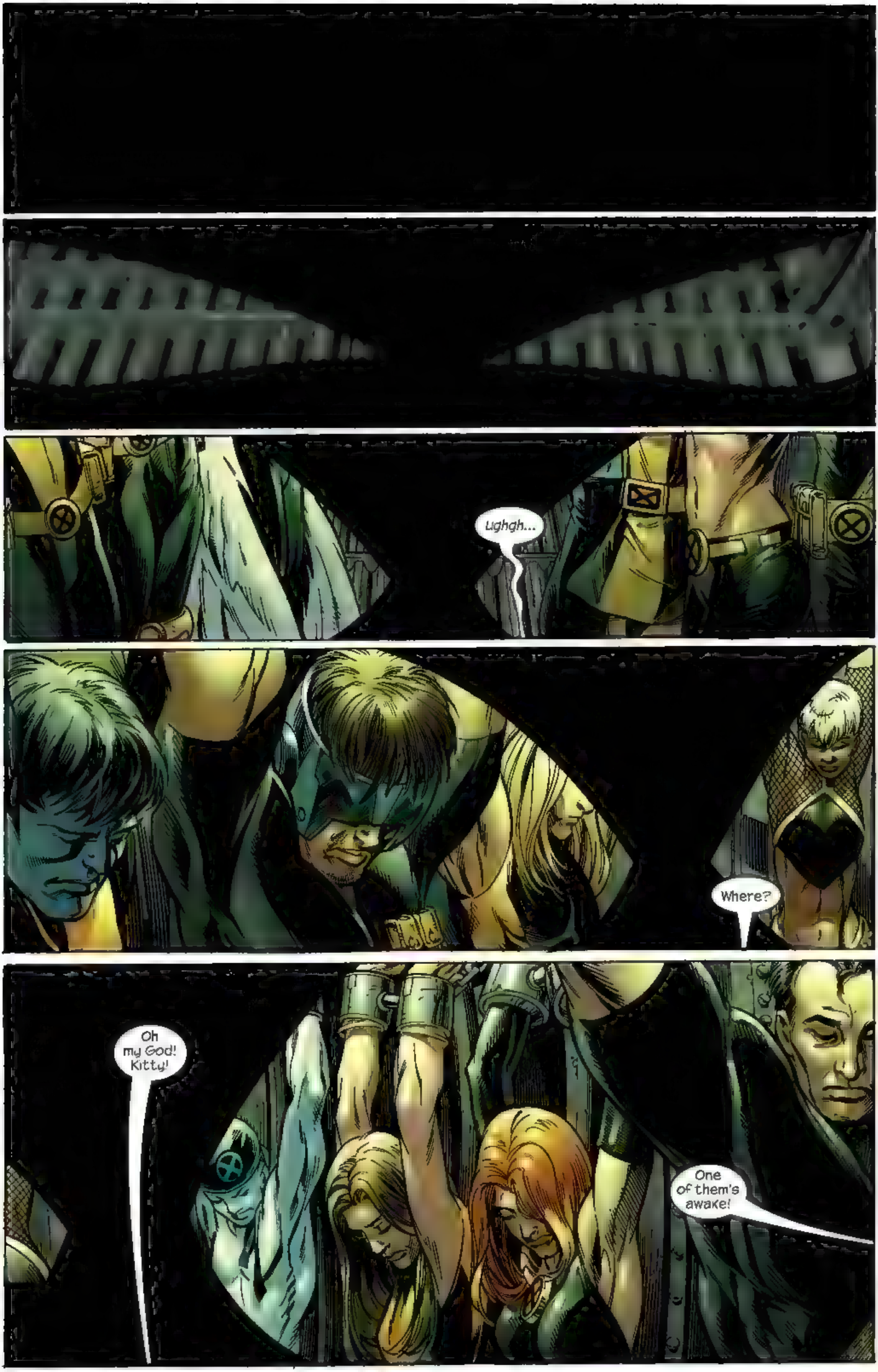
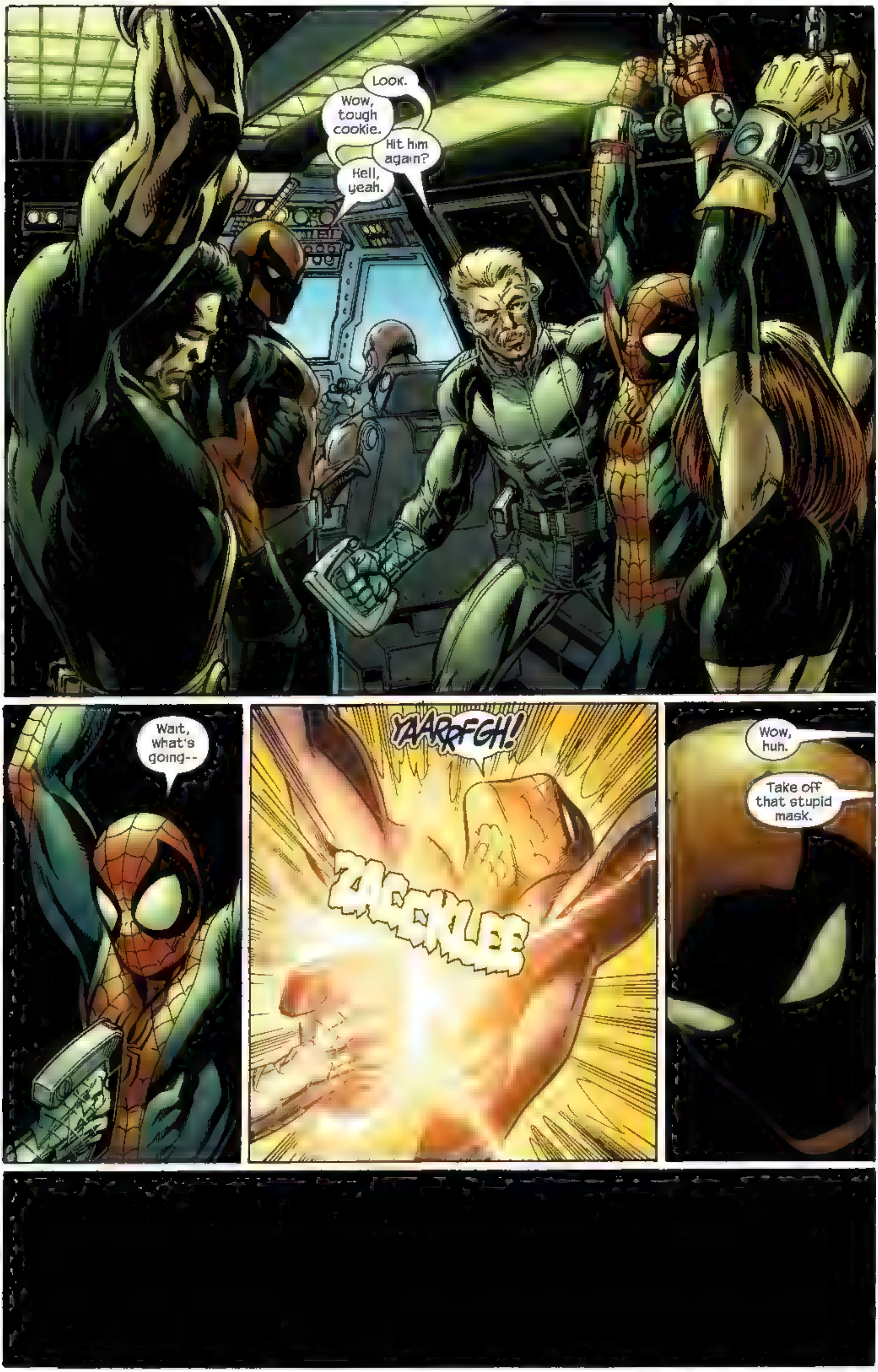
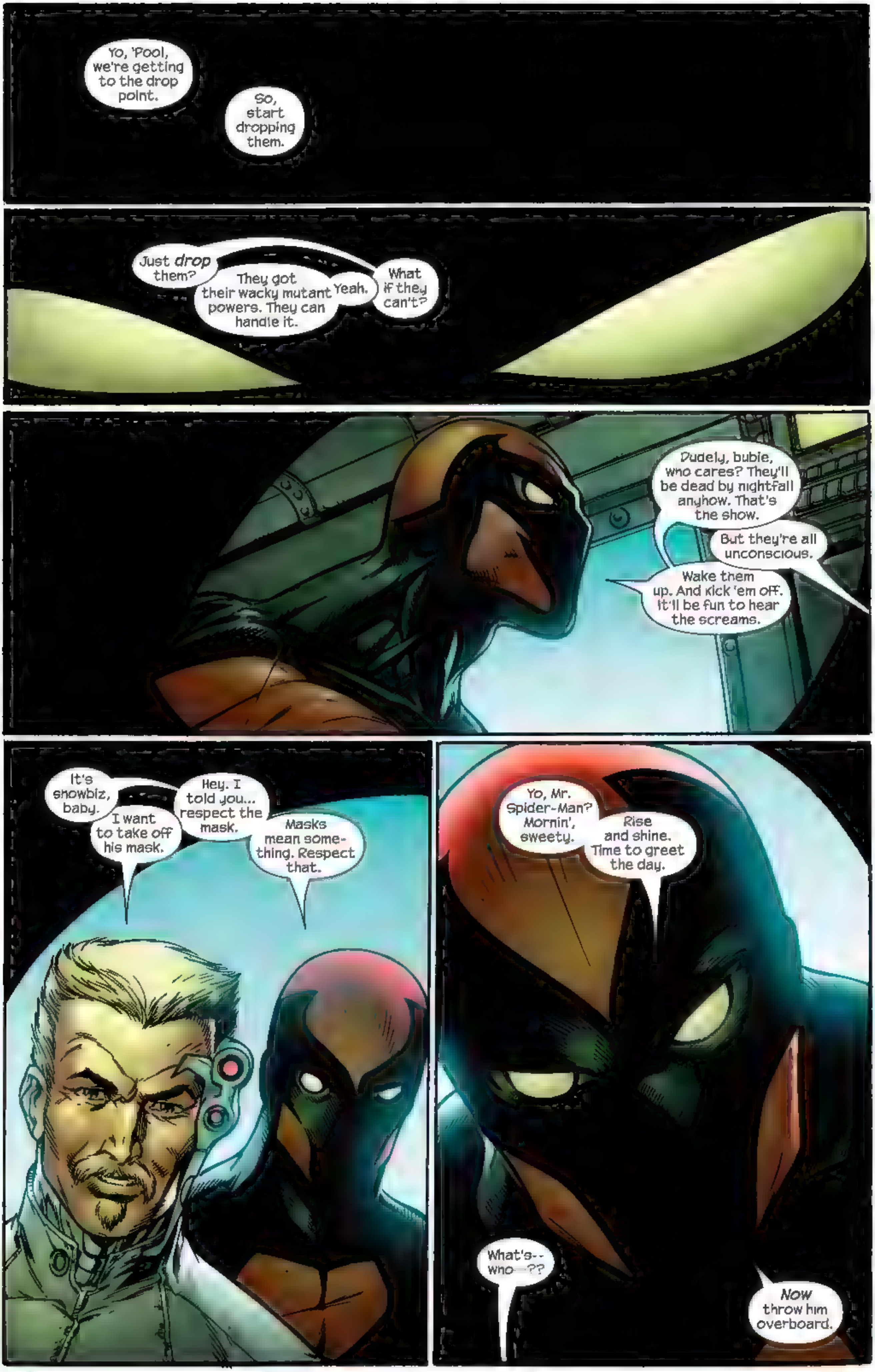
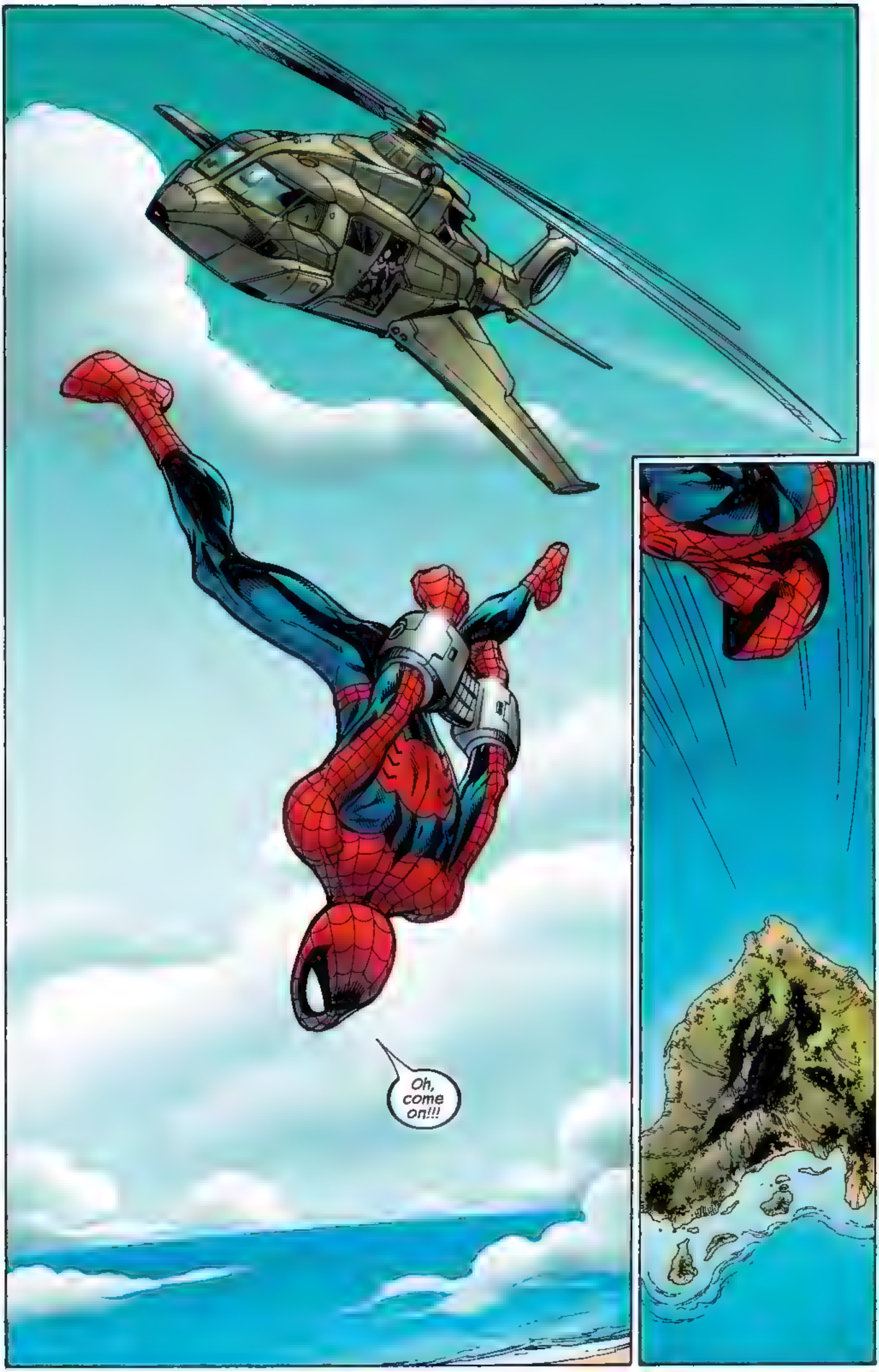
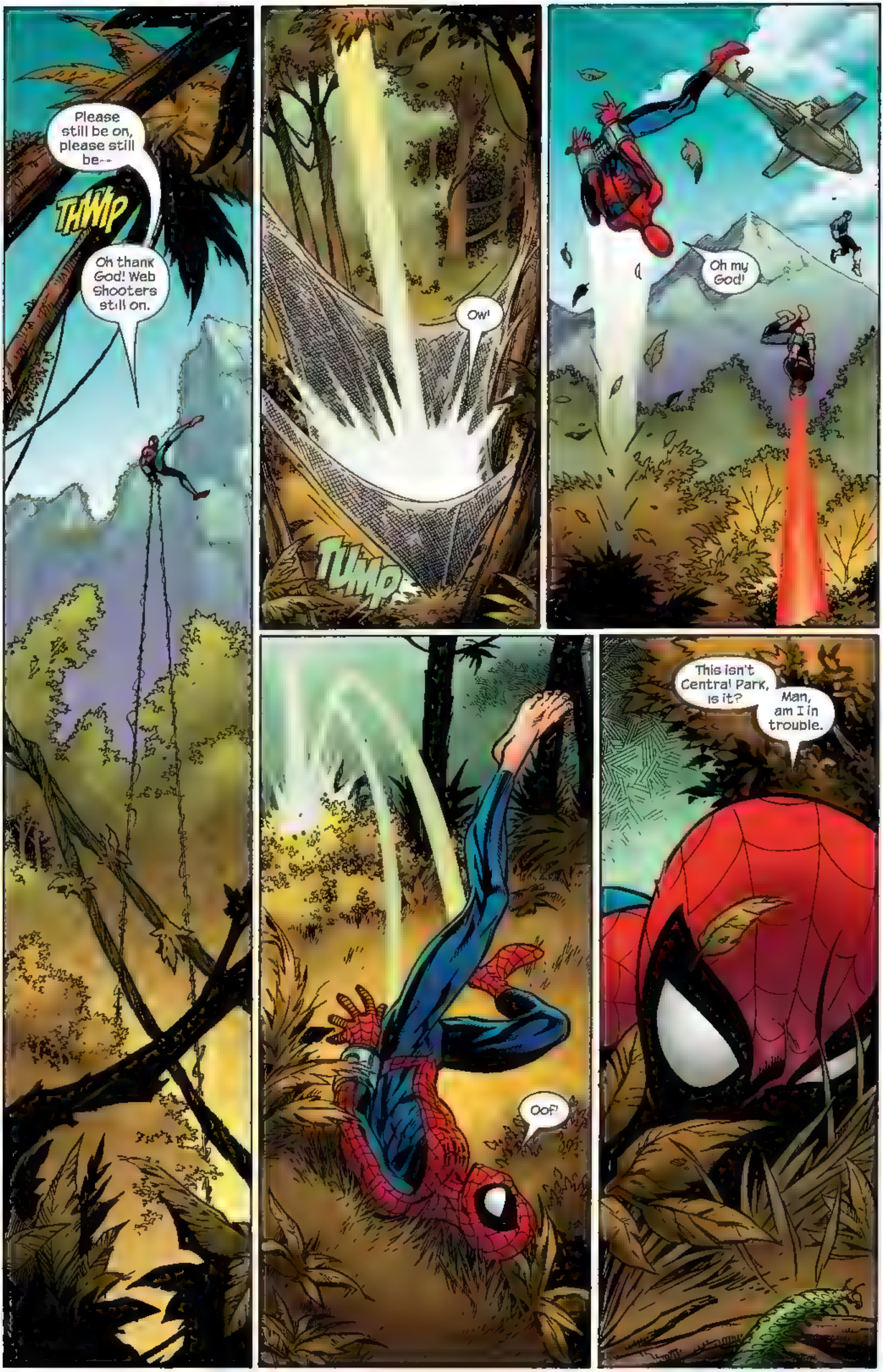
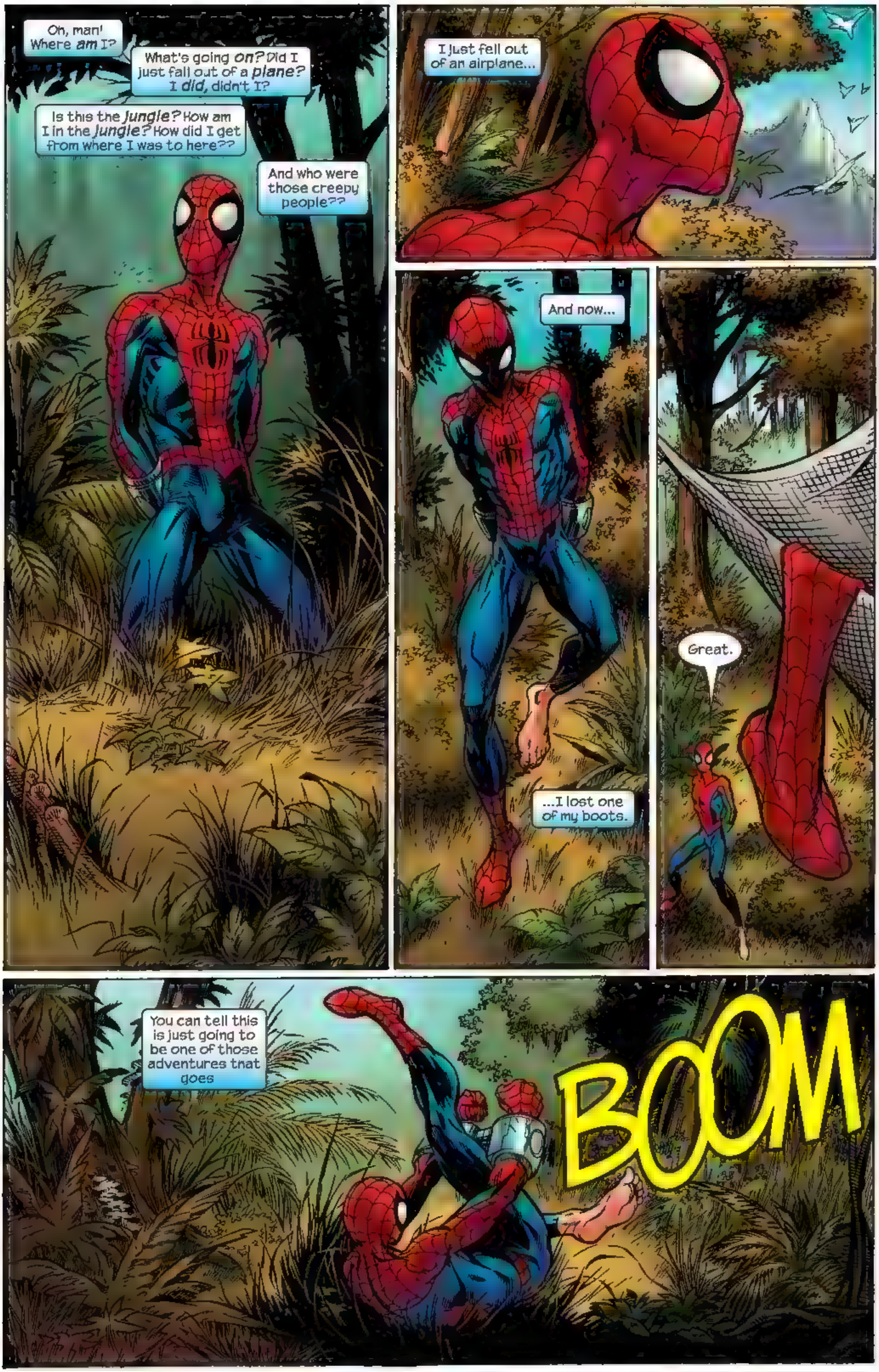

Ughgh...
Where?
Oh my God! Kitty!
One of them's awake!

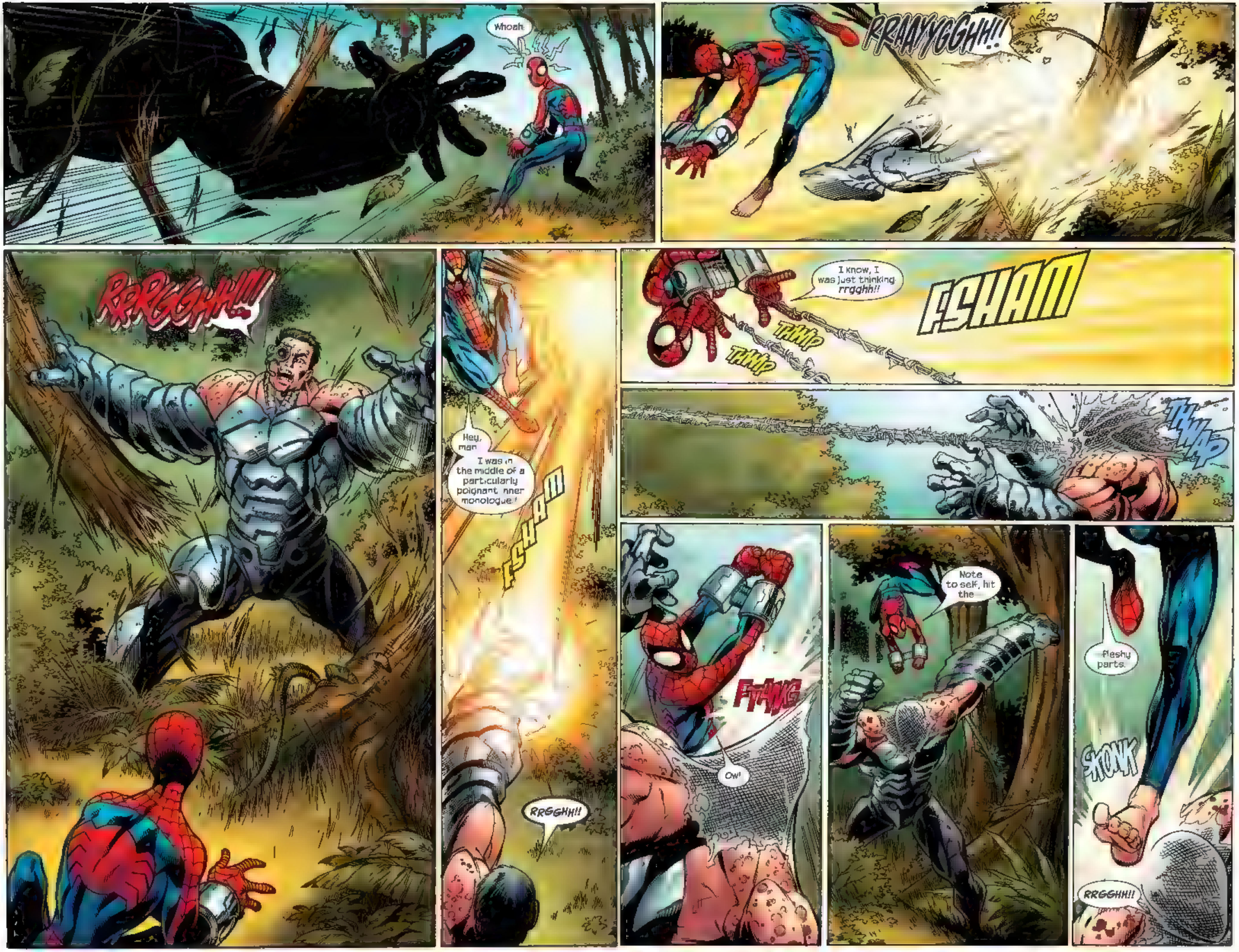

Look.
Wow, tough cookie.
Hit him again?
Hell, yeah.
Wait, what's going--
YAARRFGH!
ZACCKLEE
Wow, huh.
Take off that stupid mask.

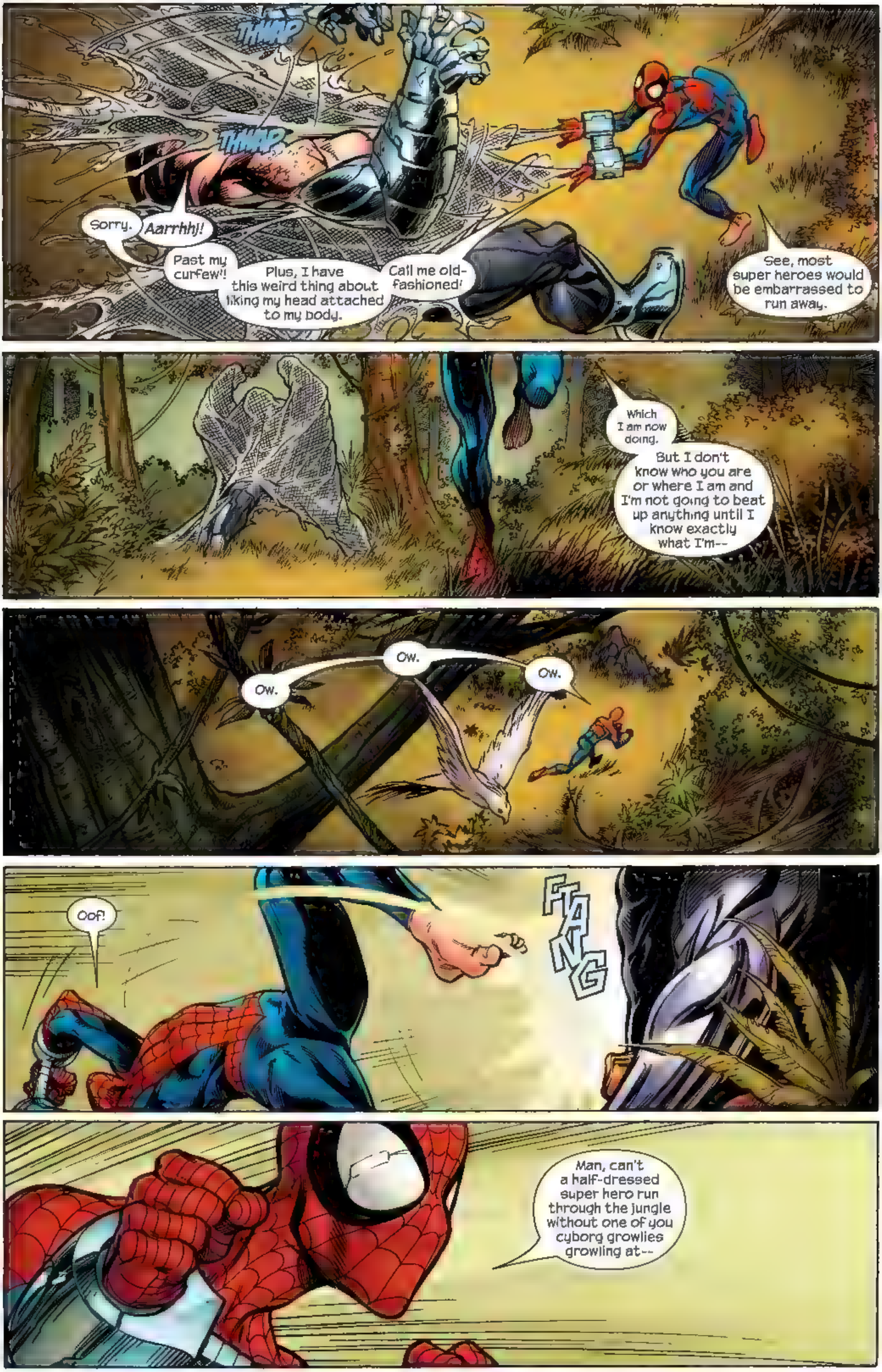

Yo, 'Pool, we're getting to the drop point.
So, start dropping them.
Just *drop* them?
They got their wacky mutant powers. They can handle it.
Yeah.
What if they can't?
Dudely, bubie, who cares? They'll be dead by nightfall anyhow. That's the show.
But they're all unconscious.
Wake them up. And kick 'em off. It'll be fun to hear the screams.
It's showbiz, baby.
I want to take off his mask.
Hey. I told you... respect the mask.
Masks mean something. Respect that.
Yo, Mr. Spider-Man? Mornin', sweety.
Rise and shine. Time to greet the day.
What's-- who--??
Now throw him overboard.

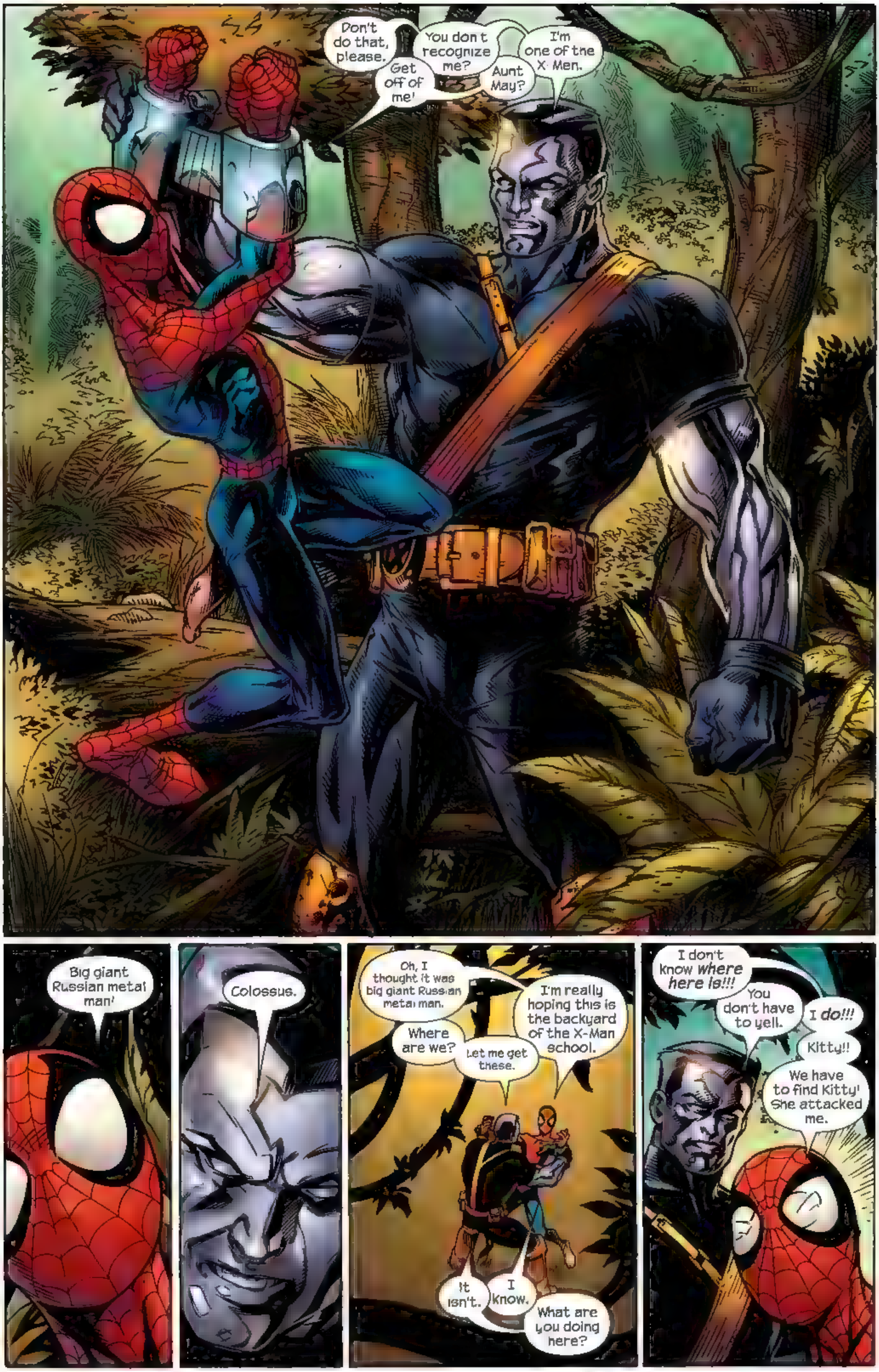

Oh, come on!!!

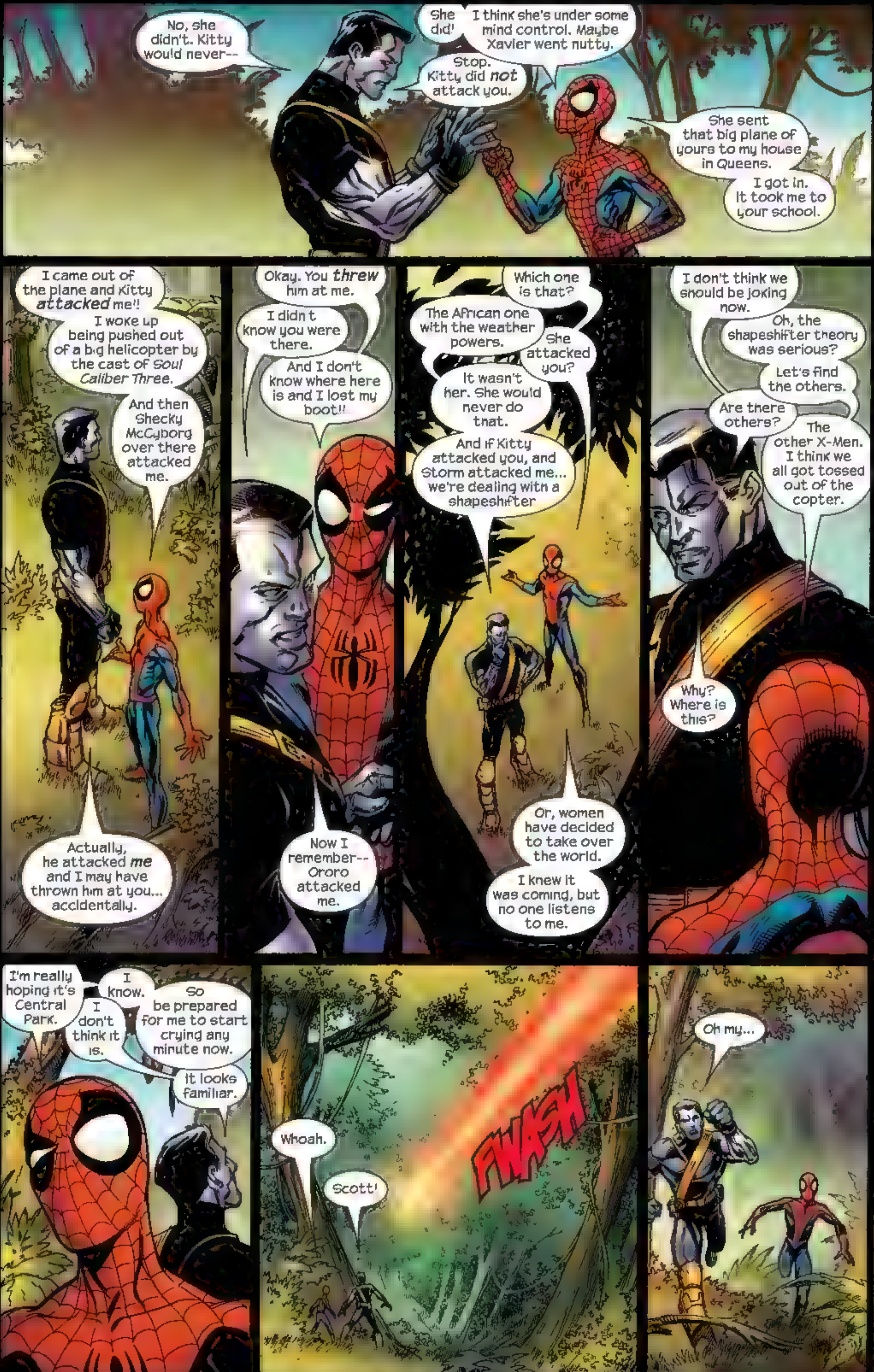

Please still be on, please still be--
THWIP
Oh thank God! Web Shooters still on.
Ow!
TUMP
Oh my God!
Oof!
This isn't Central Park, is it?
Man, am I in trouble.

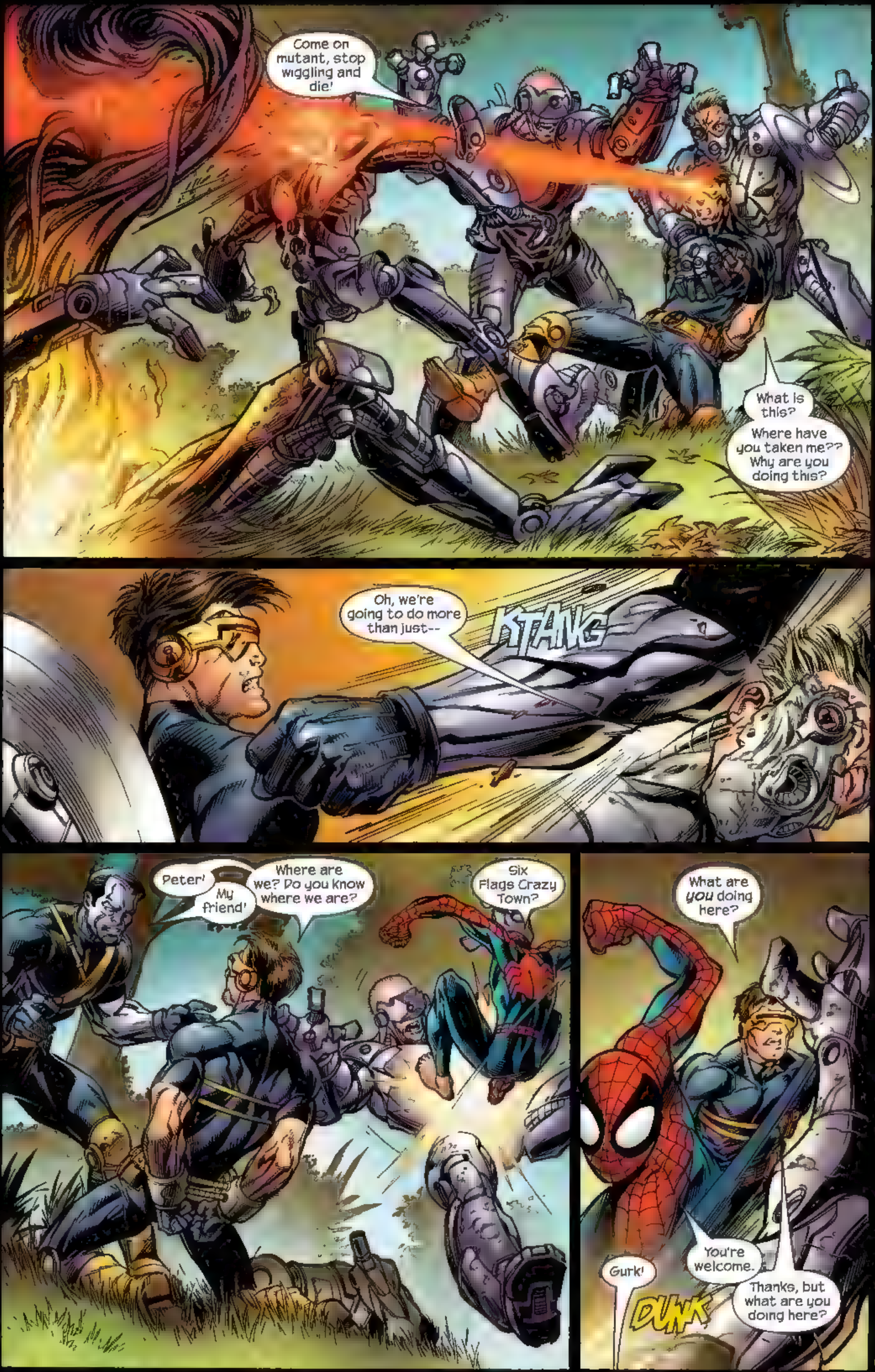

Oh, man! Where *am* I?
What's going *on?* Did I just fall out of a *plane?* I *did,* didn't I?
Is this the *jungle?* How am I in the *jungle?* How did I get from where I was to here??
And who were those creepy people??
I just fell out of an airplane...
And now...
...I lost one of my boots.
Great.
You can tell this is just going to be one of those adventures that goes
BOOM

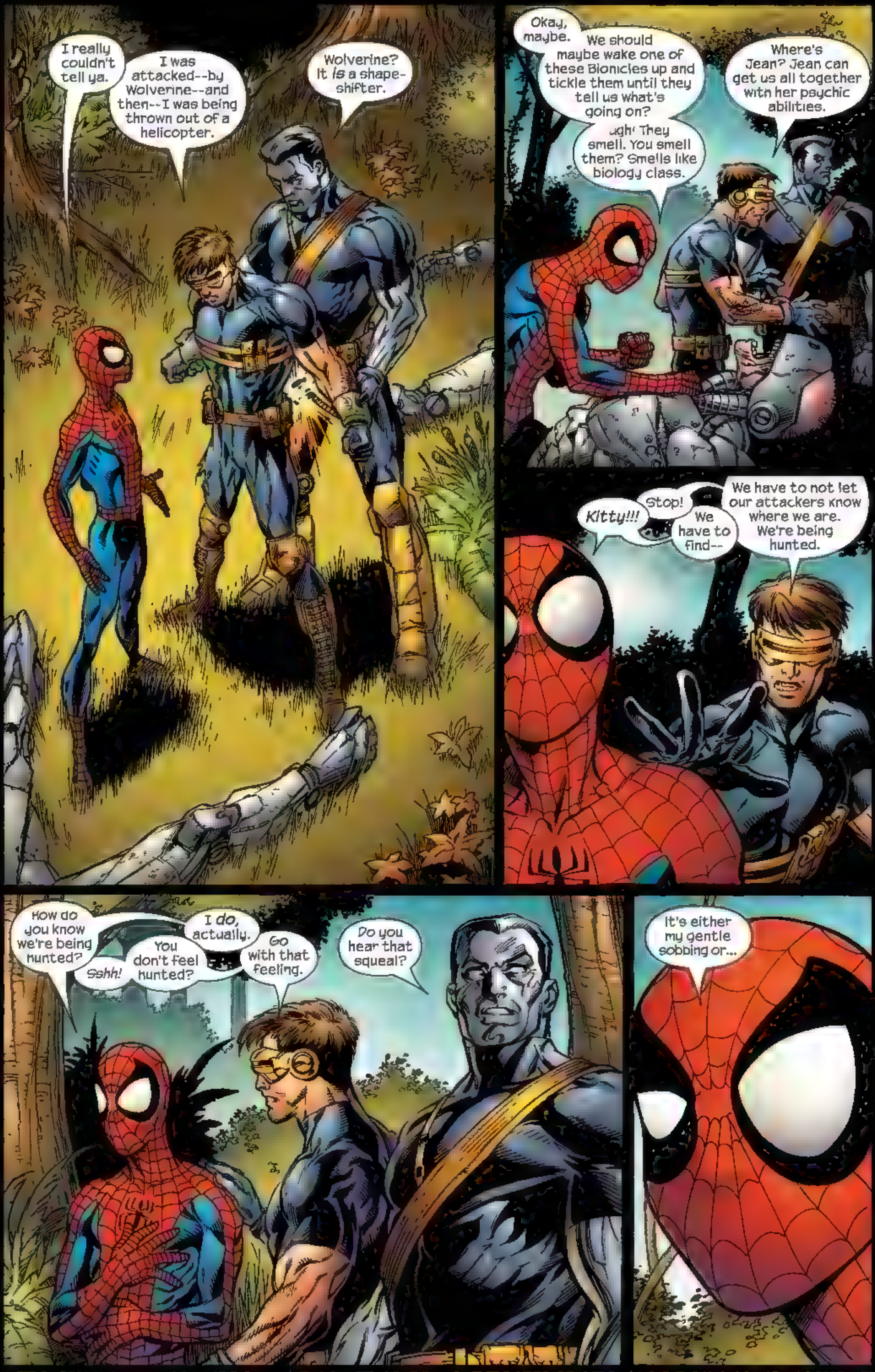

Whoah.
RRAAYYGGHH!!
RRRGGHH!!!
Hey, man.
I was in the middle of a particularly poignant inner monologue!
F-SHA!!!
RRGGHH!!
I know, I was just thinking. *rrgghh!!*
FSHAM
THMIP
THMIP
THWAP
FTHANG
Ow!
Note to self, hit the
fleshy parts.
SKONK
RRGGHH!!

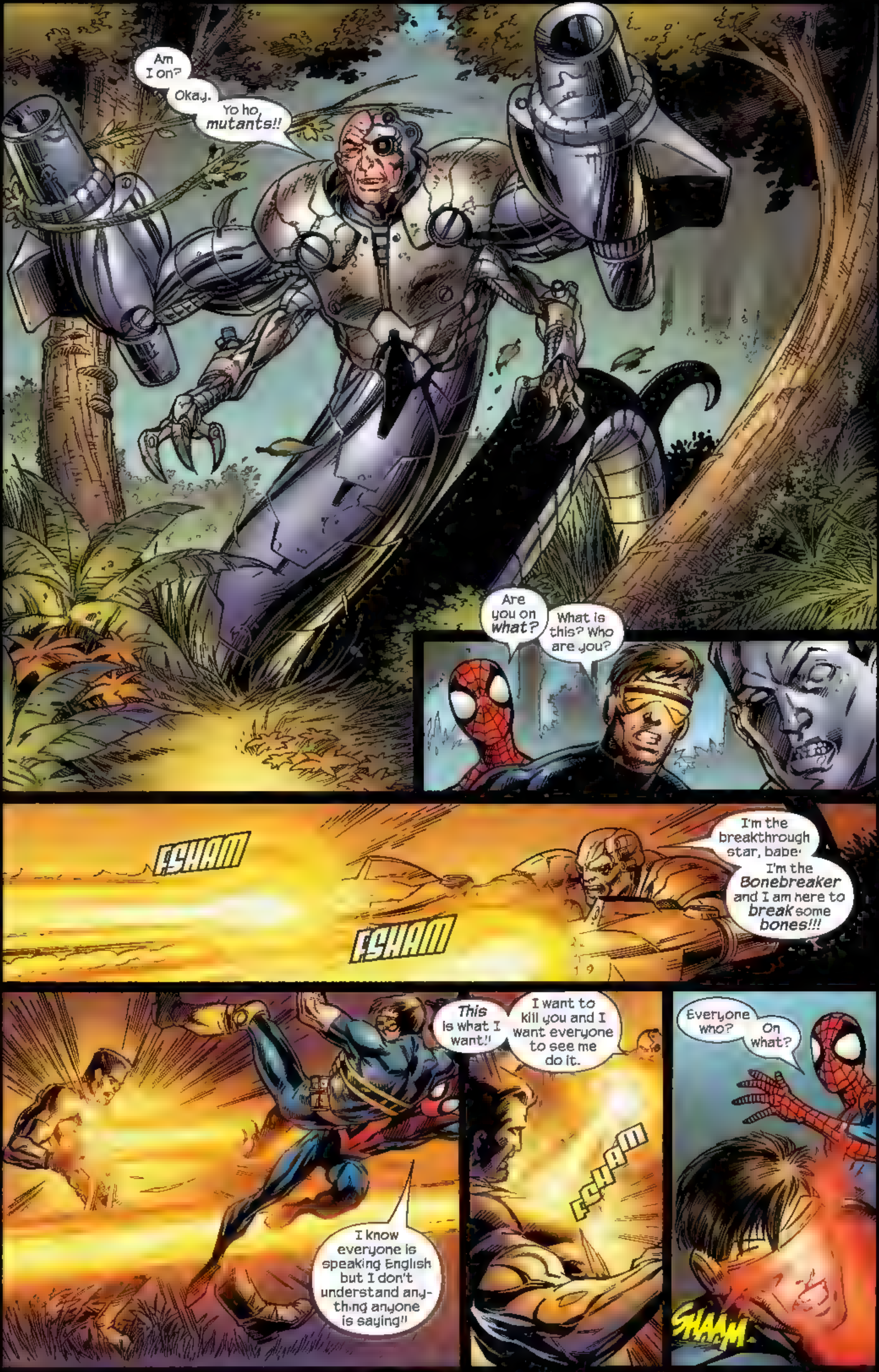

THAP
THAP
Sorry.
Aarrhh!!
Past my curfew!!
Plus, I have this weird thing about liking my head attached to my body.
Call me old-fashioned!
See, most super heroes would be embarrassed to run away.
Which I am now doing.
But I don't know who you are or where I am and I'm not going to beat up anything until I know exactly what I'm--
Ow.
Ow.
Ow.
Oof!
FTANG
Man, can't a half-dressed super hero run through the jungle without one of you cyborg growlies growling at--

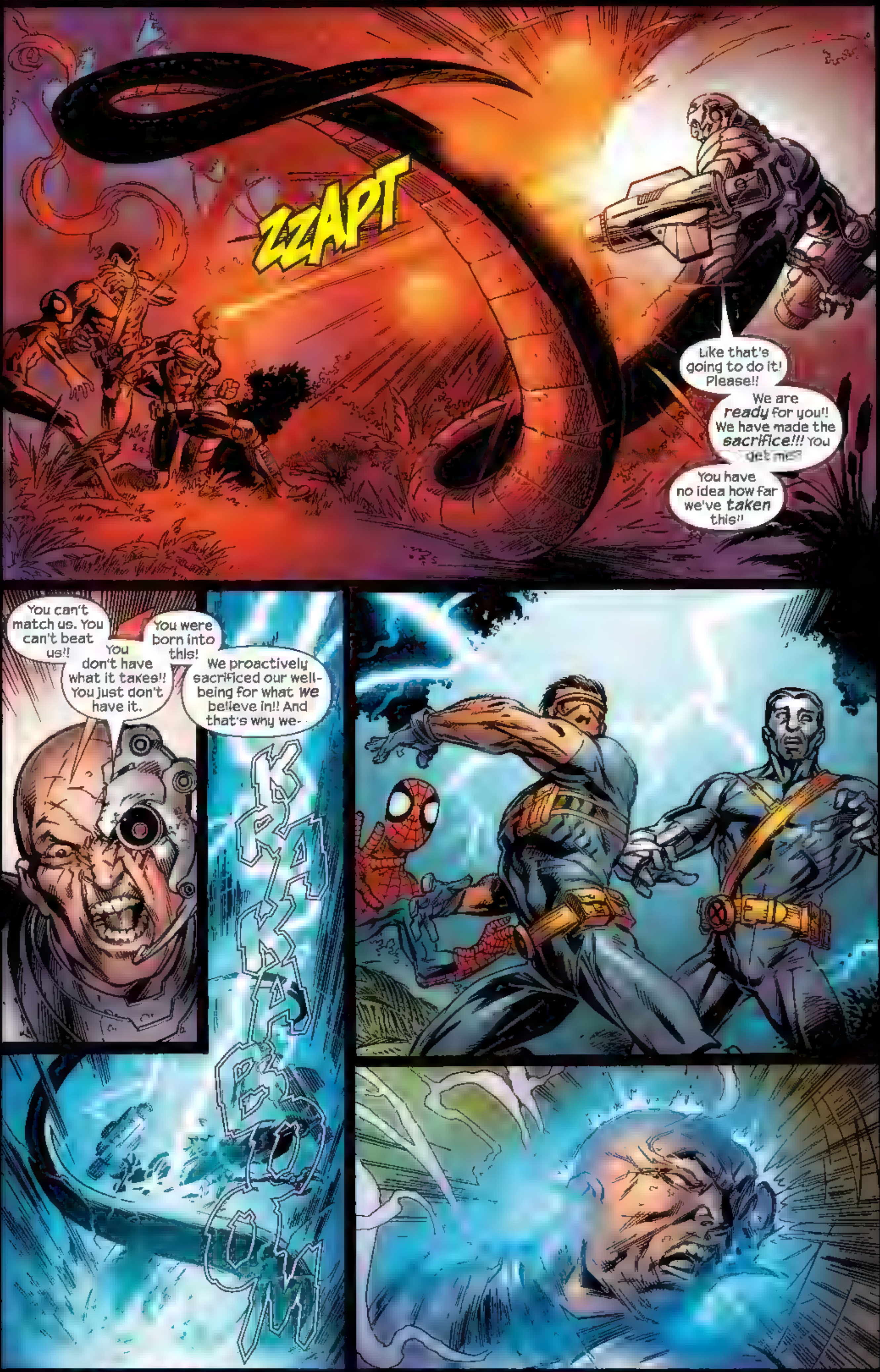

Don't do that, please.
Get off of me!
You don't recognize me?
Aunt May?
I'm one of the X-Men.
Big giant Russian metal man!
Colossus.
Oh, I thought it was big giant Russian metal man.
Where are we?
Let me get these.
I'm really hoping this is the backyard of the X-Man school.
It isn't.
I know.
What are you doing here?
I don't know *where here is!!!*
You don't have to yell.
I *do!!!*
Kitty!!
We have to find Kitty! She attacked me.

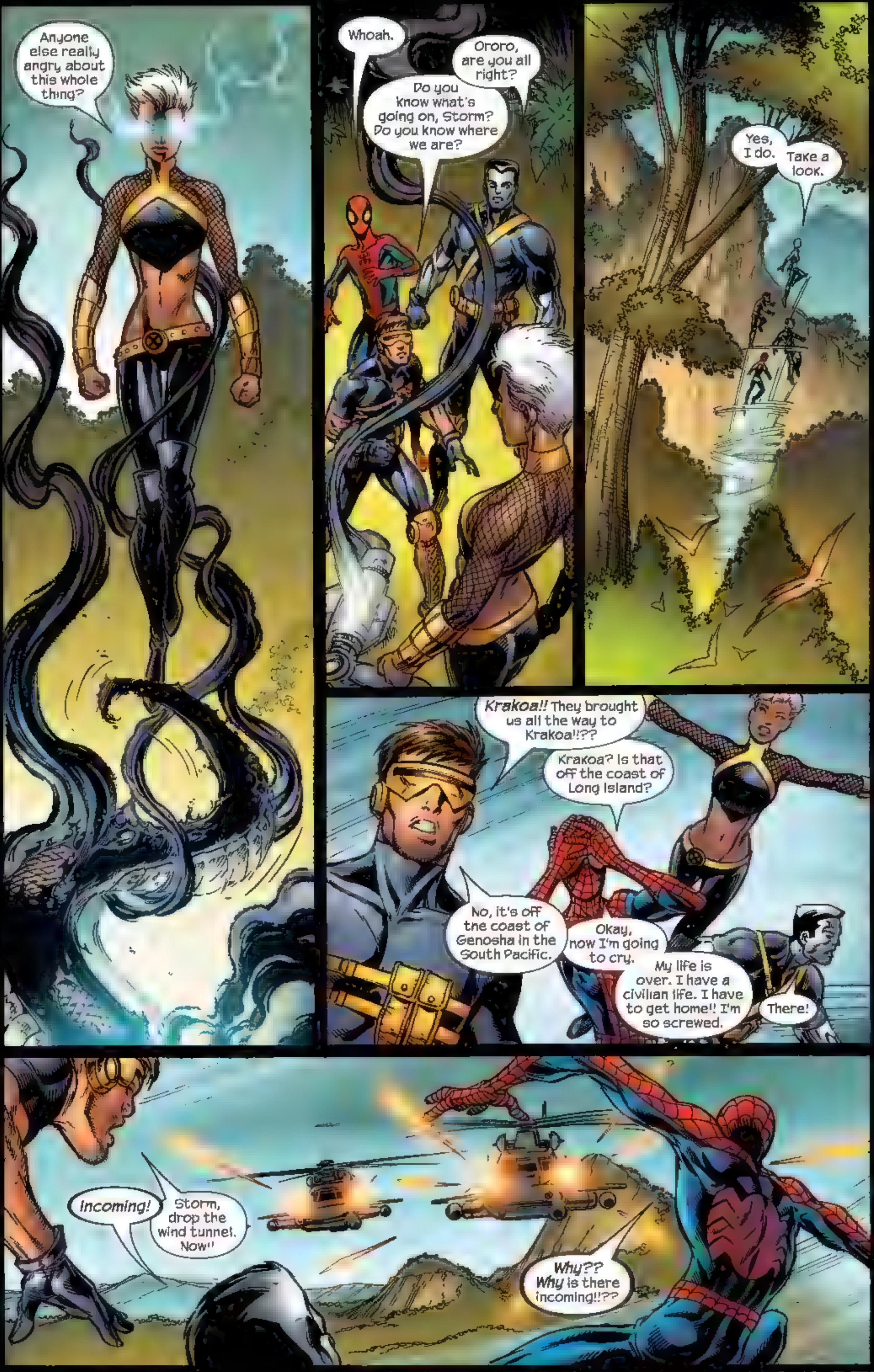

No, she didn't. Kitty would never--
She did!
I think she's under some mind control. Maybe Xavier went nutty.
Stop. Kitty did *not* attack you.
She sent that big plane of yours to my house in Queens.
I got in. It took me to your school.
I came out of the plane and Kitty *attacked* me!!
I woke up being pushed out of a big helicopter by the cast of *Soul Caliber Three*.
And then Shecky McCyborg over there attacked me.
Actually, he attacked *me* and I may have thrown him at you... accidentally.
Okay. You *threw* him at me.
I didn't know you were there.
And I don't know where here is and I lost my boot!!
Now I remember-- Ororo attacked me.
Which one is that?
The African one with the weather powers.
She attacked you?
It wasn't her. She would never do that.
And if Kitty attacked you, and Storm attacked me... we're dealing with a shapeshifter
Or, women have decided to take over the world.
I knew it was coming, but no one listens to me.
I don't think we should be joking now.
Oh, the shapeshifter theory was serious?
Let's find the others.
Are there others?
The other X-Men. I think we all got tossed out of the copter.
Why? Where is this?
I'm really hoping it's Central Park.
I know.
I don't think it is.
So be prepared for me to start crying any minute now.
It looks familiar.
Whoah.
Scott!
FWASH
Oh my...

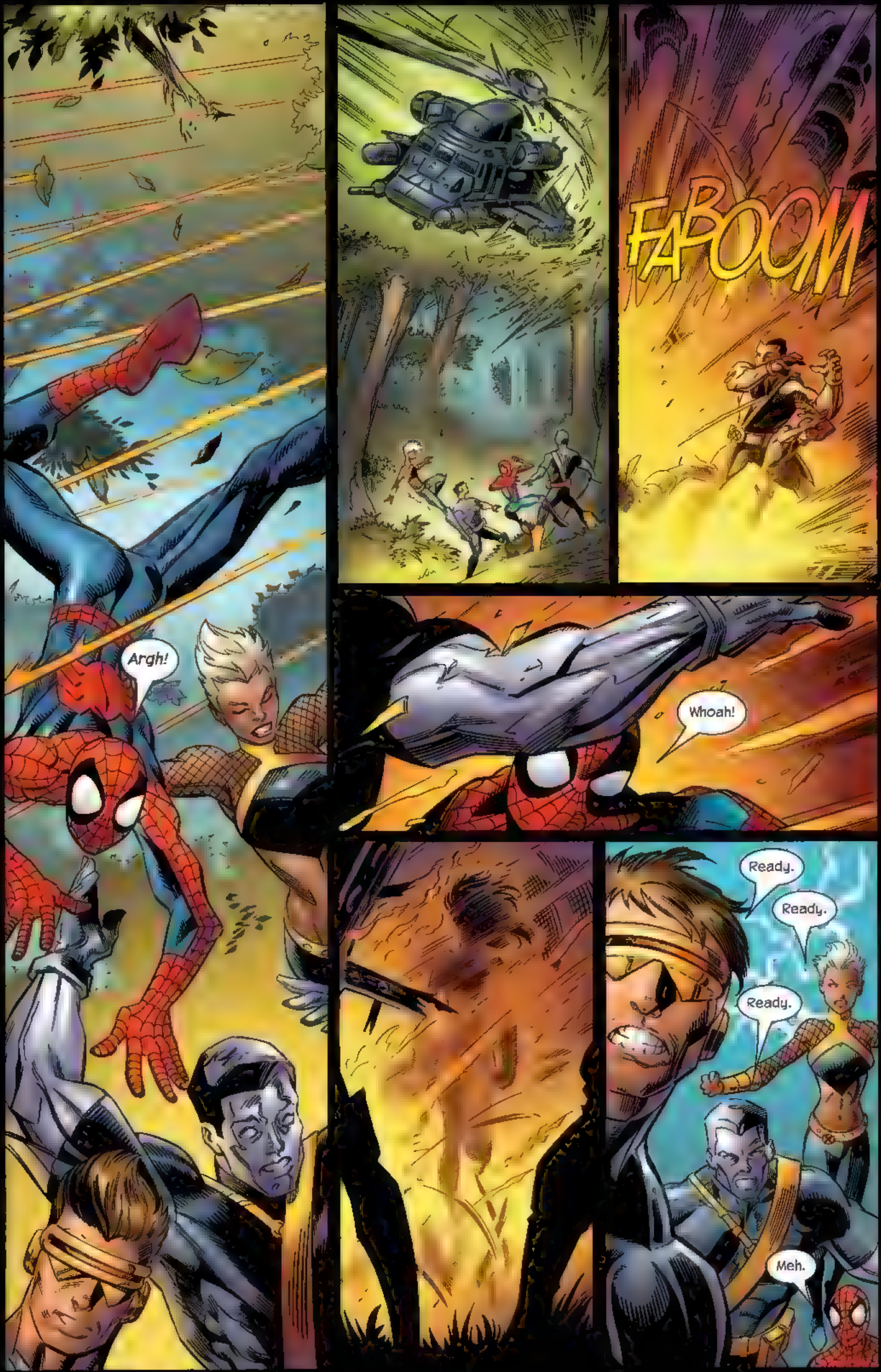

Come on mutant, stop wiggling and die!
What is this?
Where have you taken me?? Why are you doing this?
Oh, we're going to do more than just--
KTANG
Peter!
My friend!
Where are we? Do you know where we are?
Six Flags Crazy Town?
What are *you* doing here?
Gurk!
DUNK
You're welcome.
Thanks, but what are you doing here?

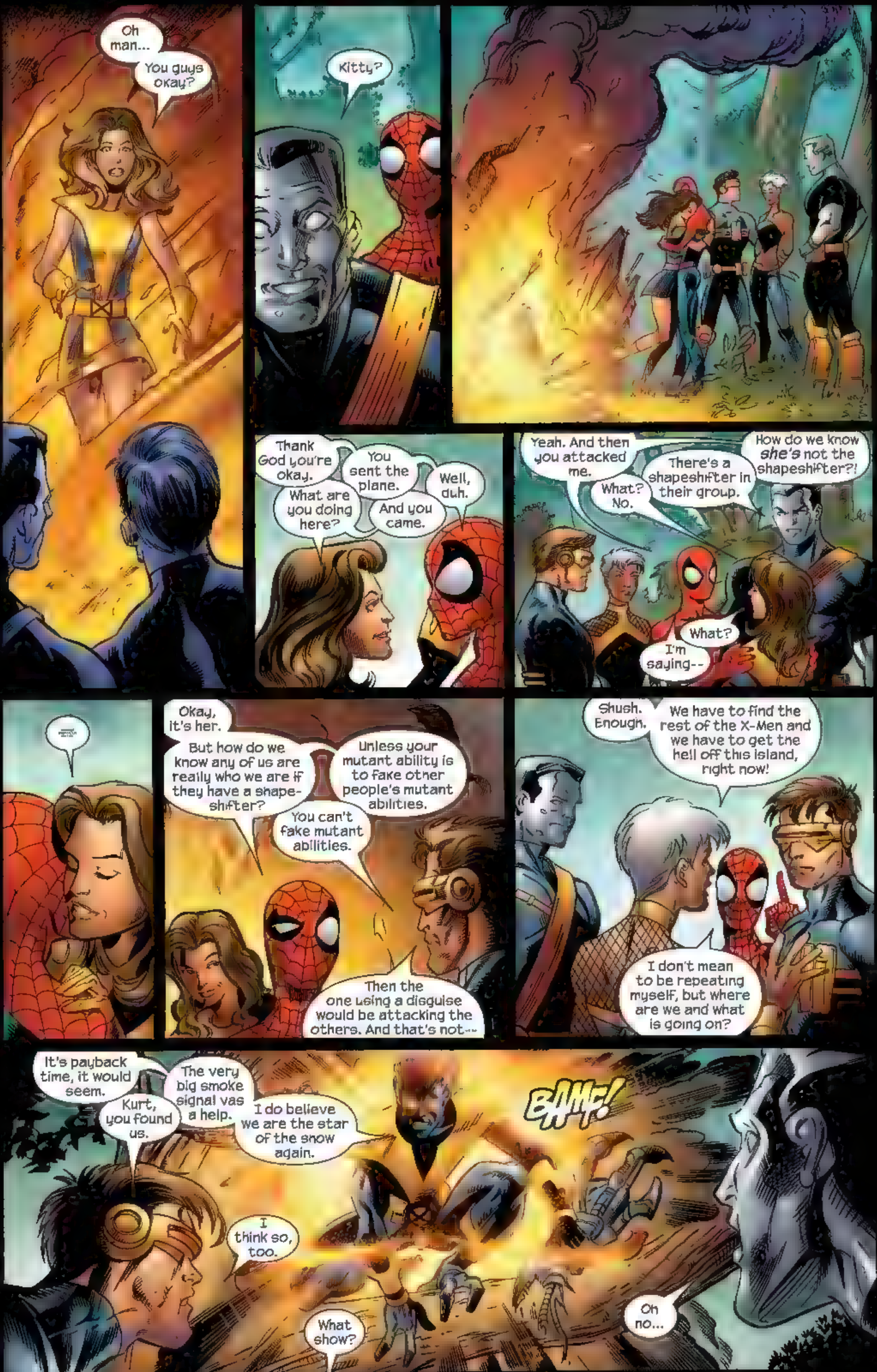

I really couldn't tell ya.
I was attacked--by Wolverine--and then--I was being thrown out of a helicopter.
Wolverine? It *is* a shape-shifter.
Okay, maybe.
We should maybe wake one of these Bionicles up and tickle them until they tell us what's going on?
ugh! They smell. You smell them? Smells like biology class.
Where's Jean? Jean can get us all together with her psychic abilities.
Kitty!!!
Stop!
We have to find--
We have to not let our attackers know where we are. We're being hunted.
How do you know we're being hunted?
Sshh!
You don't feel hunted?
I *do*, actually.
Go with that feeling.
Do you hear that squeal?
It's either my gentle sobbing or...

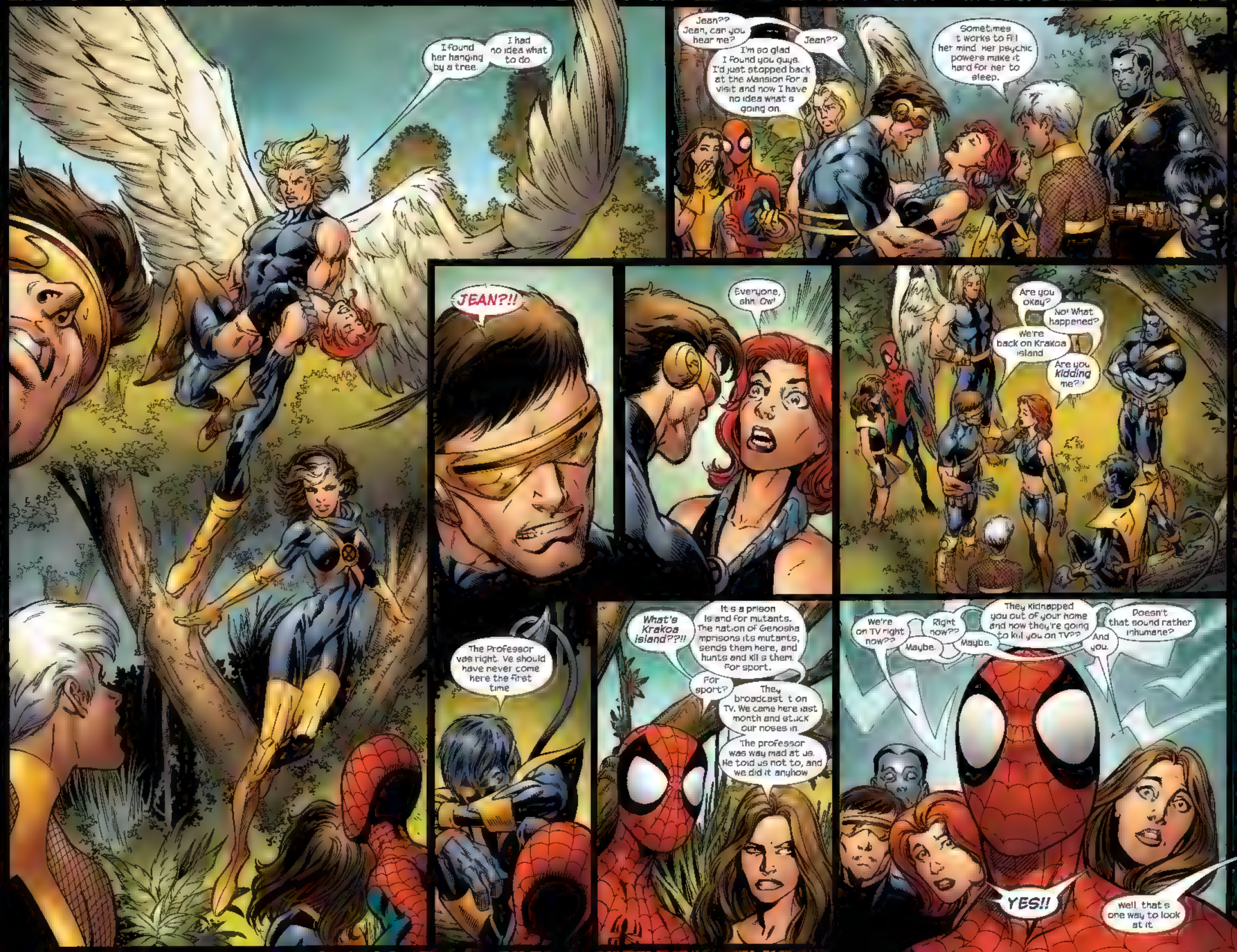

Am I on?
Okay.
Yo ho, *mutants!!*
Are you on *what?*
What is this? Who are you?
FSHAM
FSHAM
I'm the breakthrough star, babe!
I'm the *Bonebreaker* and I am here to *break* some *bones!!!*
I know everyone is speaking English but I don't understand anything anyone is saying!!
This is what I want!!
I want to kill you and I want everyone to see me do it.
FSHAM
Everyone who?
On what?
SHAAM

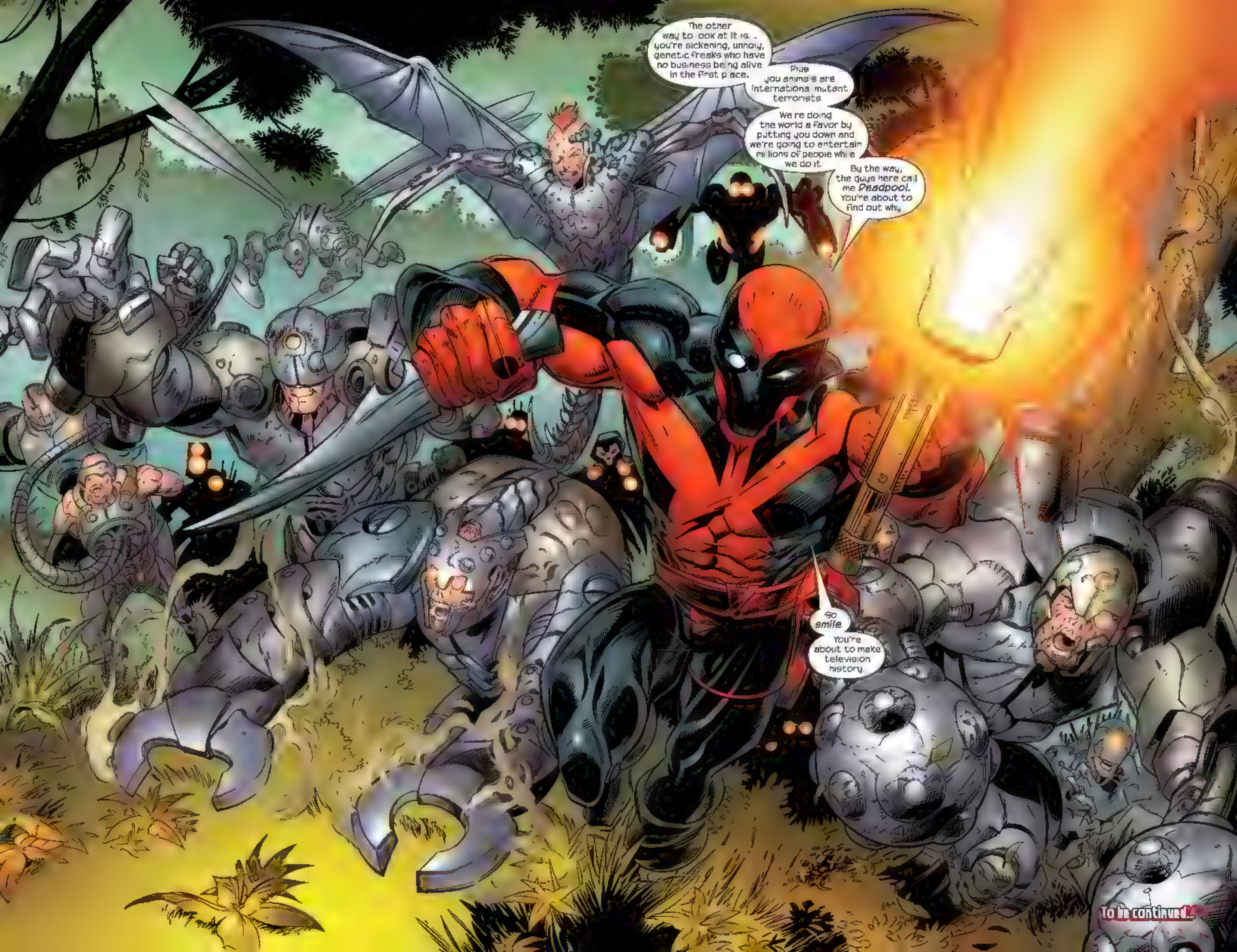

ZZAPT
Like that's going to do it! Please!!
We are *ready* for you!! We have made the *sacrifice!!!* You get me?
You have no idea how far we've *taken* this!!
You can't match us. You can't beat us!!
You don't have what it takes!! You just don't have it.
You were born into this!
We proactively sacrificed our well-being for what *we* believe in!! And that's why we--
KRAKABOOM


Anyone else really angry about this whole thing?
Whoah.
Ororo, are you all right?
Do you know what's going on, Storm? Do you know where we are?
Yes, I do.
Take a look.
Krakoa!! They brought us all the way to Krakoa!!??
Krakoa? Is that off the coast of Long Island?
No, it's off the coast of Genosha in the South Pacific.
Okay, now I'm going to cry.
My life is over. I have a civilian life. I have to get home!! I'm so screwed.
There!
Incoming!
Storm, drop the wind tunnel. Now!!
Why?? *Why* is there incoming!!??


FABOOM
Argh!
Whoah!
Ready.
Ready.
Ready.
Meh.


Oh man...
You guys okay?
Kitty?
Thank God you're okay.
You sent the plane.
Well, duh.
What are you doing here?
And you came.
Yeah. And then you attacked me.
What? No.
There's a shapeshifter in their group.
How do we know *she's* not the shapeshifter?!
What?
I'm saying--
Okay, it's her.
But how do we know any of us are really who we are if they have a shape-shifter?
Unless your mutant ability is to fake other people's mutant abilities.
You can't fake mutant abilities.
Then the one using a disguise would be attacking the others. And that's not--
Shush. Enough.
We have to find the rest of the X-Men and we have to get the hell off this island, right now!
I don't mean to be repeating myself, but where are we and what is going on?
It's payback time, it would seem.
The very big smoke signal vas a help.
Kurt, you found us.
I do believe we are the star of the show again.
BAMF!
I think so, too.
What show?
Oh no...


I found her hanging by a tree.
I had no idea what to do.
Jean?? Jean, can you hear me?
Jean??
I'm so glad I found you guys. I'd just stopped back at the Mansion for a visit and now I have no idea what's going on.
Sometimes it works to fill her mind. Her psychic powers make it hard for her to sleep.
JEAN?!!
Everyone, shh. Ow!
Are you okay?
No! What happened?
We're back on Krakoa island.
Are you *kidding* me?!!
The Professor was right. We should have never come here the first time.
What's Krakoa island??!!
It's a prison island for mutants. The nation of Genosha imprisons its mutants, sends them here, and hunts and kills them. For sport.
For sport?
They broadcast it on TV. We came here last month and stuck our noses in.
The professor was way mad at us. He told us not to, and we did it anyhow.
We're on TV right now??
Right now??
Maybe.
Maybe.
They kidnapped you out of your home and now they're going to kill you on TV??
And you.
Doesn't that sound rather inhumane?
YES!!
Well, that's one way to look at it.


The other way to look at it is... you're sickening, unholy, genetic freaks who have no business being alive in the first place.
Plus you animals are international mutant terrorists.
We're doing the world a favor by putting you down and we're going to entertain millions of people while we do it.
By the way, the guys here call me *Deadpool*. You're about to find out why.
So *smile*.
You're about to make television history.
To be continued...

ULTIMATE
SPIDER-MAN
ISSUE
93
DEADPOOL: PART 3
BENDIS
BAGLEY
MIKI
MARVEL

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PREVIOUSLY IN ULTIMATE SPIDER-MAN...

The bite of a genetically-altered spider granted high school student Peter Parker incredible, arachnid-like powers! When a burglar killed his beloved Uncle Ben, a grief-stricken Peter vowed to use his amazing abilities to protect his fellow man. He learned the invaluable lesson that with great power must also come great responsibility...

Having recently broken up with his girlfriend, Mary Jane, Peter started dating Kitty Pryde, member of the super-powered mutant team, the X-Men. After a crime-fighting date, Kitty returns to the X-Mansion—only to be ambushed and kidnapped by someone called Deadpool and his band of cyborg Reavers!

In a last-ditch effort to escape, Kitty sends the X-Men's jet to Peter's house. Peter dons his Spider-Man costume and investigates, but the craft flies (on autopilot) back to the Mansion, where Deadpool kidnaps Spidey, as well!

Peter finds himself on the island of Krakoa, where the X-Men had once gone up against the mutant-hating Mojo, who broadcasts a reality-TV show...where mutants serve as the world's most dangerous game. As Spidey tracks down Kitty and the rest of the X-Men (including the visiting Angel), he finds himself in an all-out war with the Reavers!

DEADPOOL

PART 3 of 4

Brian Michael Bendis WRITER
Mark Bagley PENCILER
Danny Miki INKER
Richard Isanove COLORIST
VC's Cory Petit LETTERER

Kate Levin PRODUCTION
Nicole Boose ASST. EDITOR
John Barber ASSOC. EDITOR
Ralph Macchio EDITOR
Joe Quesada EDITOR IN CHIEF
Dan Buckley PUBLISHER

Cover: Mark Bagley & Richard Isanove

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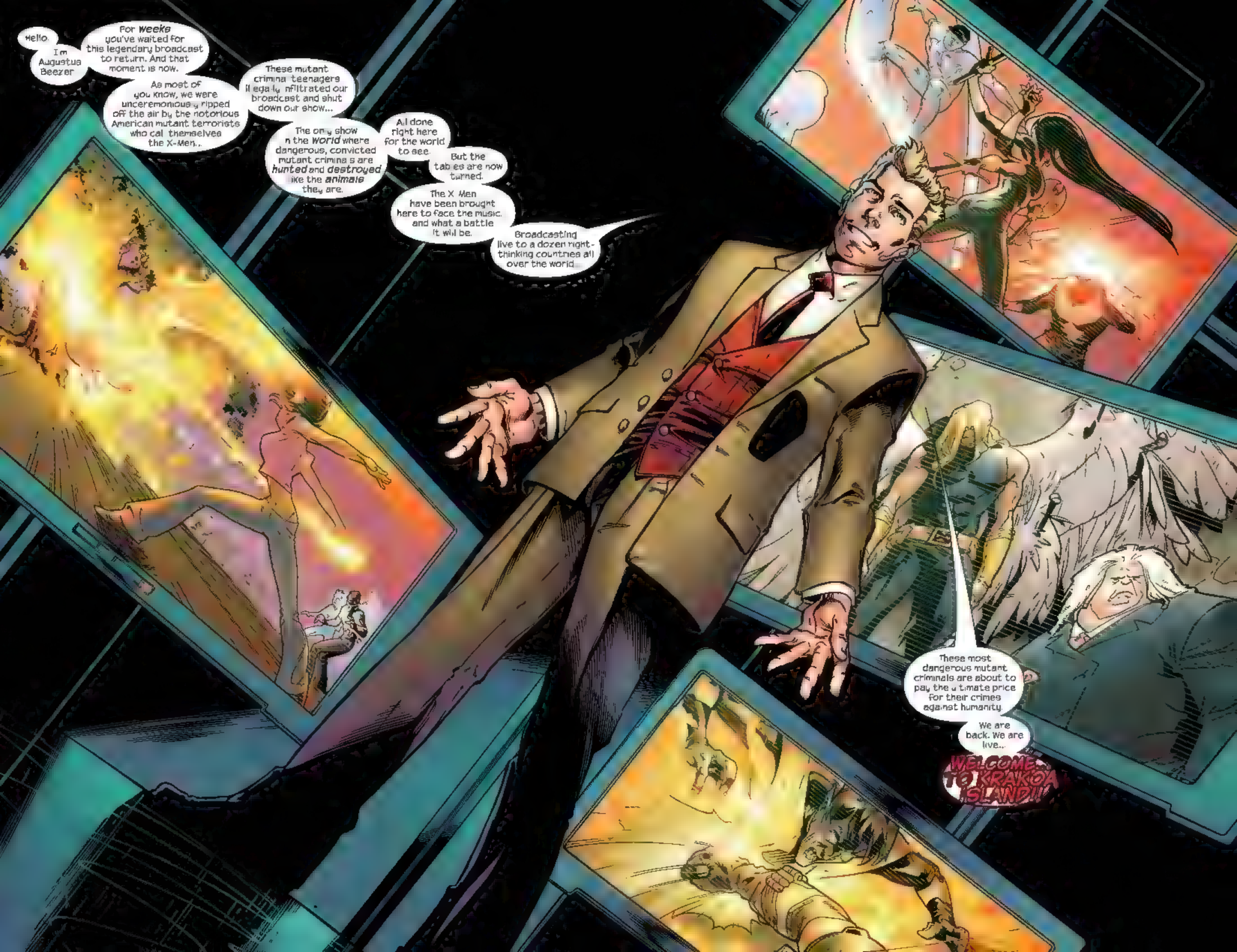
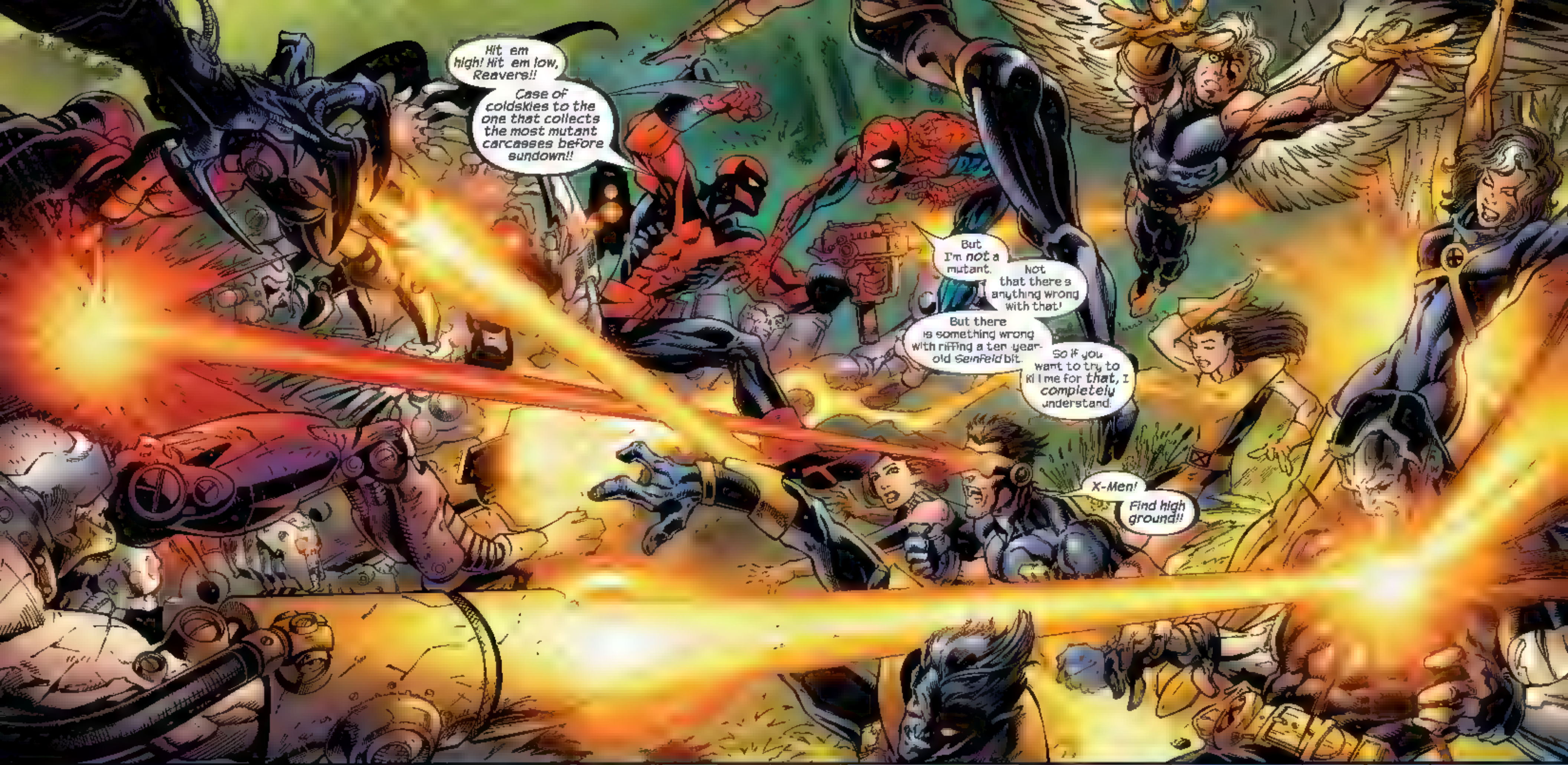
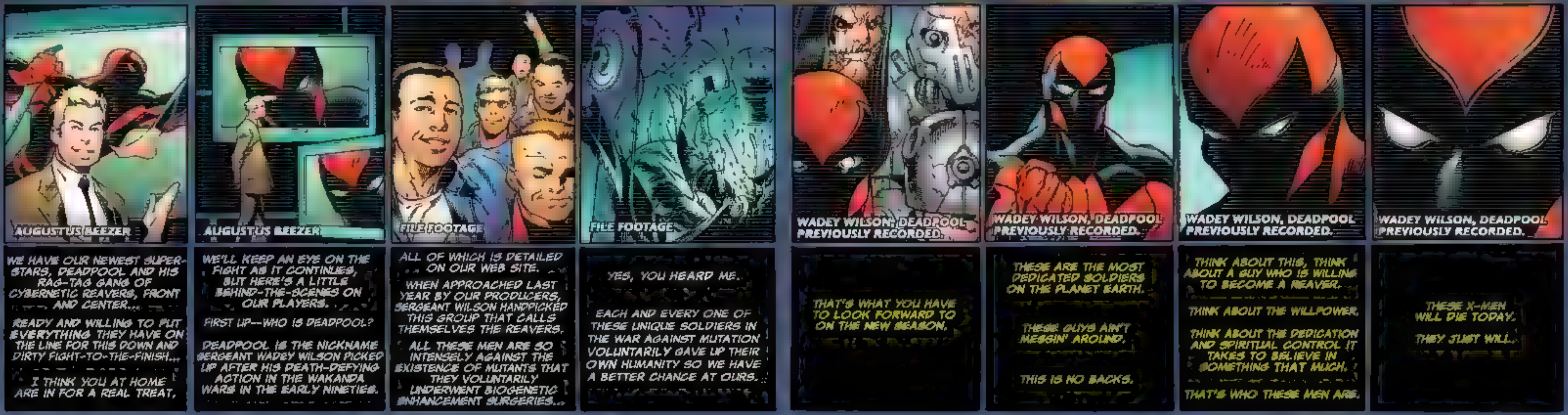
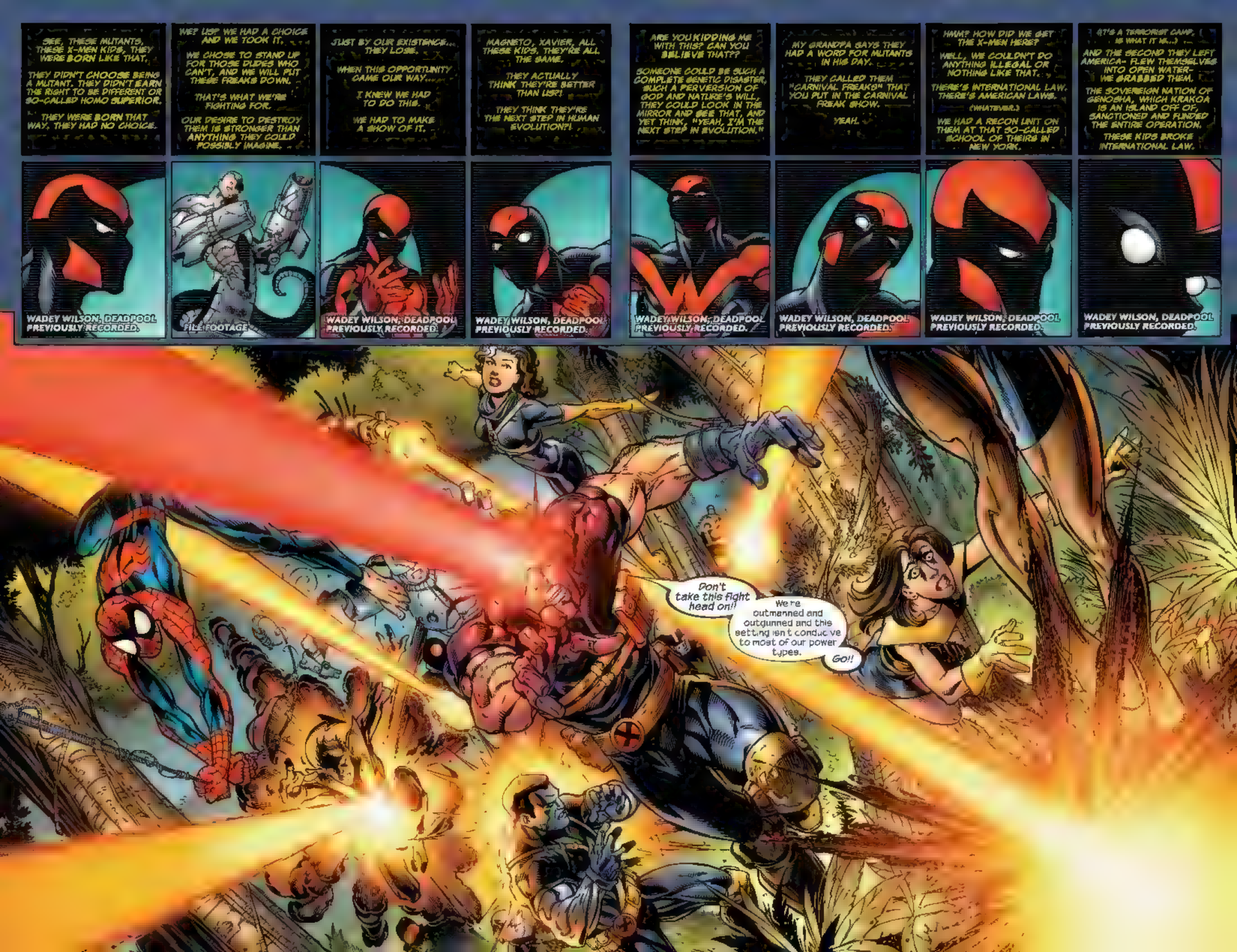
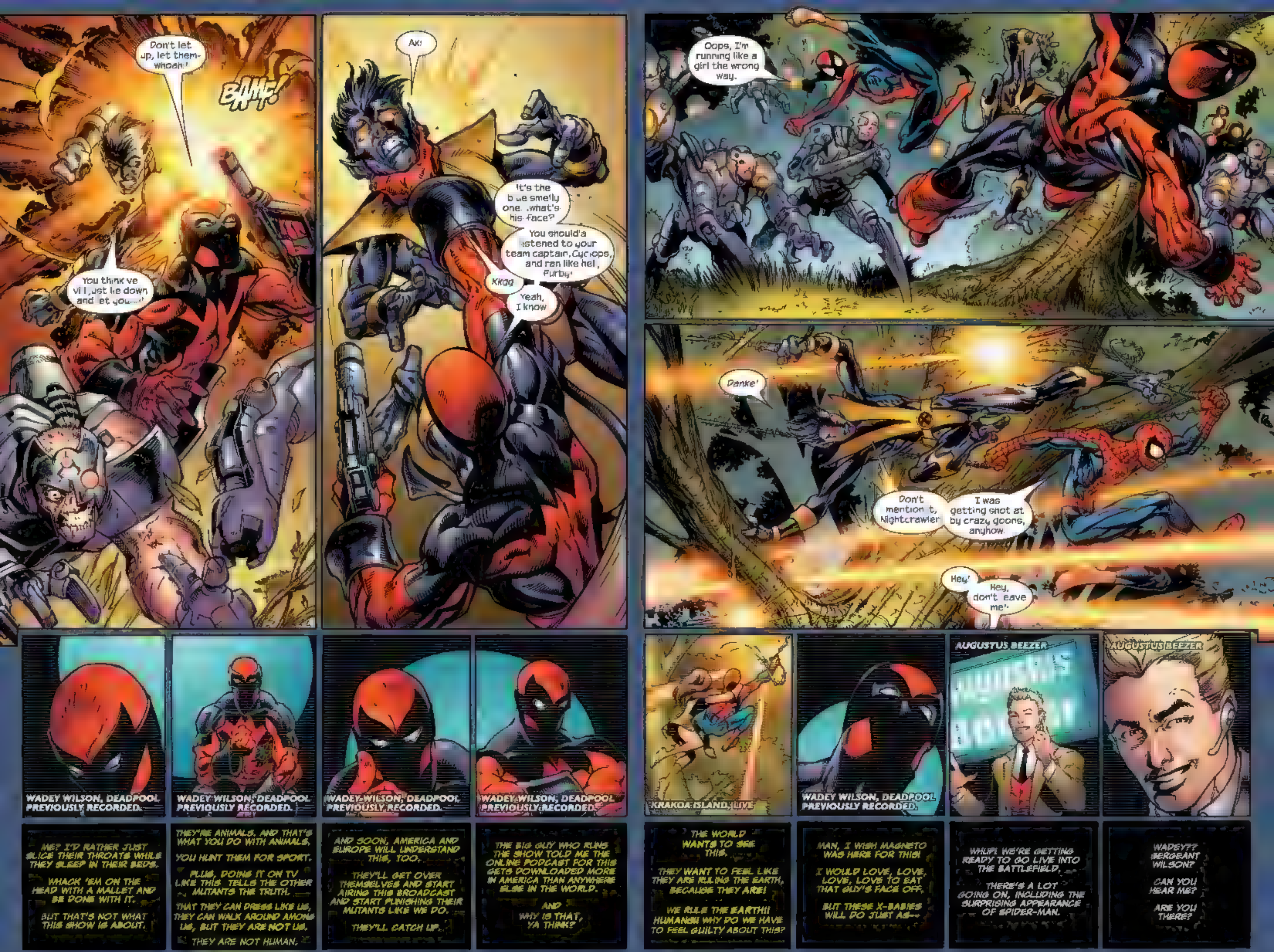
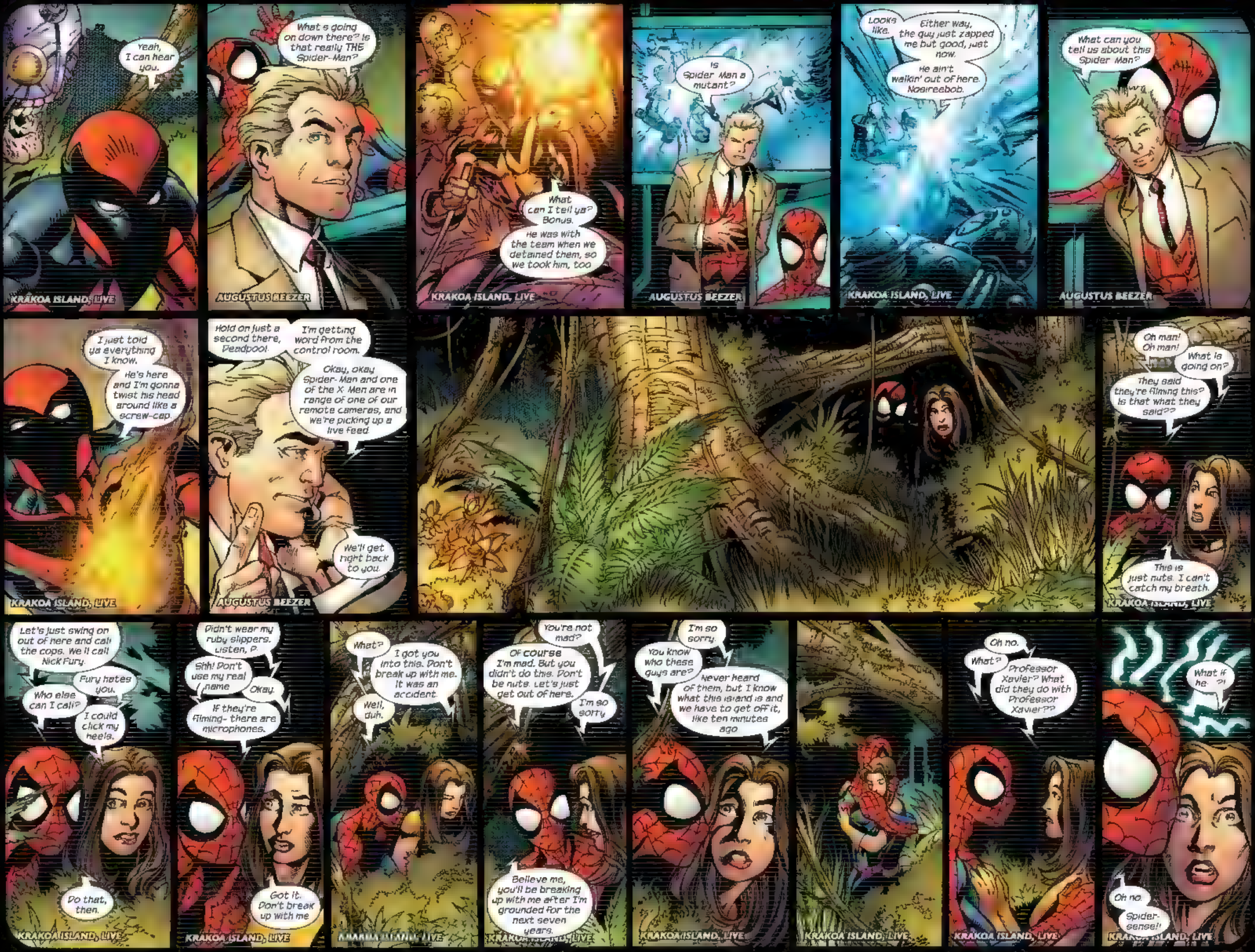

Hello.
I'm Augustus Beezer
For *weeks* you've waited for this legendary broadcast to return. And that moment is now.
As most of you know, we were unceremoniously ripped off the air by the notorious American mutant terrorists who call themselves the X-Men...
These mutant criminal teenagers illegally infiltrated our broadcast and shut down our show...
The only show in the *world* where dangerous, convicted mutant criminals are *hunted* and *destroyed* like the *animals* they are.
All done right here for the world to see.
But the tables are now turned.
The X-Men have been brought here to face the music. and what a battle it will be.
Broadcasting live to a dozen right-thinking countries all over the world...
These most dangerous mutant criminals are about to pay the ultimate price for their crimes against humanity.
We are back. We are live...
WELCOME TO KRAKOA ISLAND!!

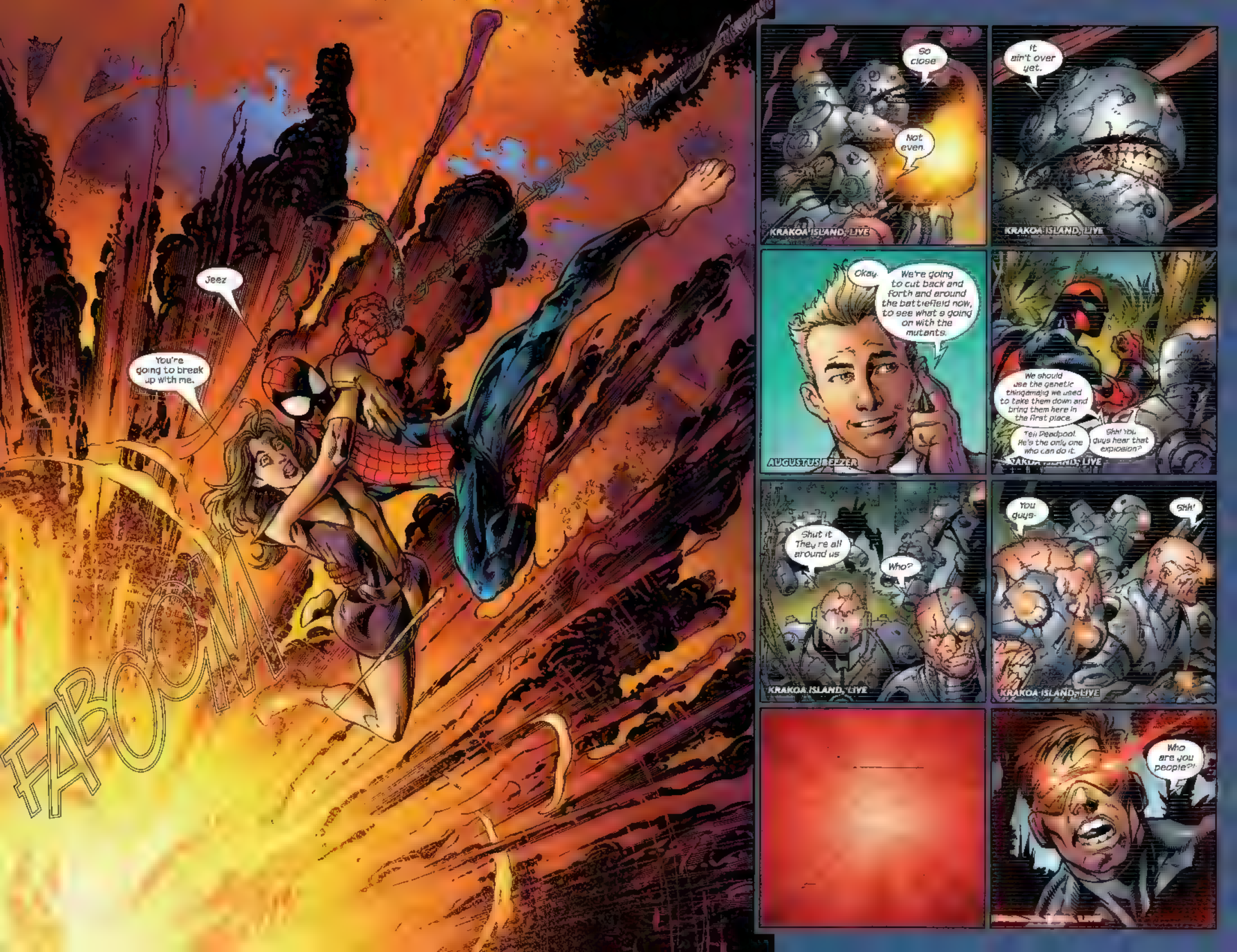

Hit em high! Hit em low, Reavers!!
Case of coldskies to the one that collects the most mutant carcasses before sundown!!
But I'm *not* a mutant.
Not that there's anything wrong with that!
But there is something wrong with riffing a ten-year-old *Seinfeld* bit.
So if you want to try to kill me for *that*, I completely understand.
X-Men!
Find high ground!!

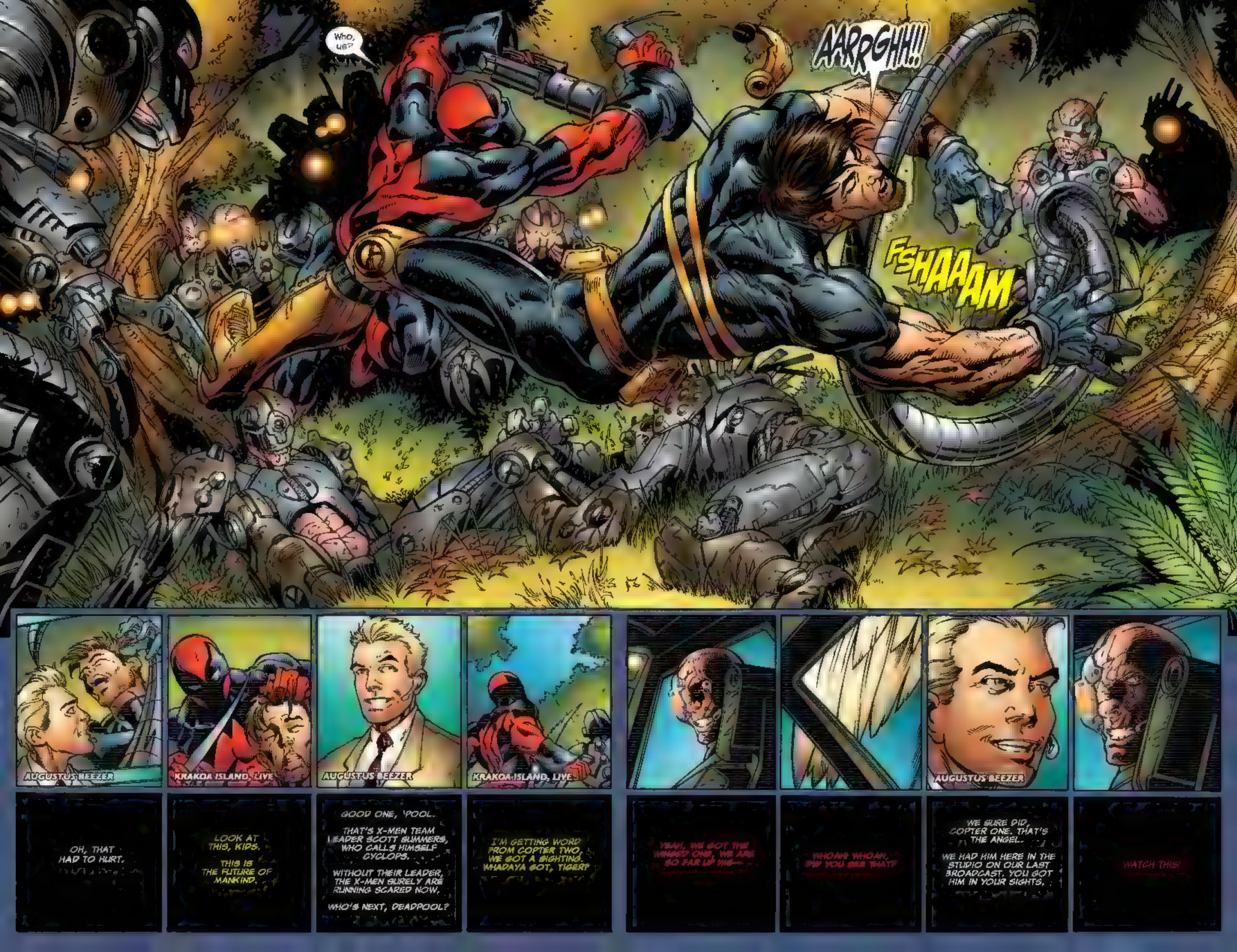

AUGUSTUS BEEZER
WE HAVE OUR NEWEST SUPERSTARS, DEADPOOL AND HIS RAG-TAG GANG OF CYBERNETIC REAVERS, FRONT AND CENTER...
READY AND WILLING TO PUT EVERYTHING THEY HAVE ON THE LINE FOR THIS DOWN AND DIRTY FIGHT-TO-THE-FINISH...
I THINK YOU AT HOME ARE IN FOR A REAL TREAT.
AUGUSTUS BEEZER
WE'LL KEEP AN EYE ON THE FIGHT AS IT CONTINUES, BUT HERE'S A LITTLE BEHIND-THE-SCENES ON OUR PLAYERS.
FIRST UP--WHO IS DEADPOOL?
DEADPOOL IS THE NICKNAME SERGEANT WADEY WILSON PICKED UP AFTER HIS DEATH-DEFYING ACTION IN THE WAKANDA WARS IN THE EARLY NINETIES.
FILE FOOTAGE
ALL OF WHICH IS DETAILED ON OUR WEB SITE.
WHEN APPROACHED LAST YEAR BY OUR PRODUCERS, SERGEANT WILSON HANDPICKED THIS GROUP THAT CALLS THEMSELVES THE REAVERS.
ALL THESE MEN ARE SO INTENSELY AGAINST THE EXISTENCE OF MUTANTS THAT THEY VOLUNTARILY UNDERWENT BIOGENETIC ENHANCEMENT SURGERIES...
FILE FOOTAGE
YES, YOU HEARD ME.
EACH AND EVERY ONE OF THESE UNIQUE SOLDIERS IN THE WAR AGAINST MUTATION VOLUNTARILY GAVE UP THEIR OWN HUMANITY SO WE HAVE A BETTER CHANCE AT OURS.
WADEY WILSON, DEADPOOL PREVIOUSLY RECORDED.
THAT'S WHAT YOU HAVE TO LOOK FORWARD TO ON THE NEW SEASON.
WADEY WILSON, DEADPOOL PREVIOUSLY RECORDED.
THESE ARE THE MOST DEDICATED SOLDIERS ON THE PLANET EARTH.
THESE GUYS AIN'T MESSIN' AROUND.
THIS IS NO BACKS.
WADEY WILSON, DEADPOOL PREVIOUSLY RECORDED.
THINK ABOUT THIS, THINK ABOUT A GUY WHO IS WILLING TO BECOME A REAVER.
THINK ABOUT THE WILLPOWER.
THINK ABOUT THE DEDICATION AND SPIRITUAL CONTROL IT TAKES TO BELIEVE IN SOMETHING THAT MUCH.
THAT'S WHO THESE MEN ARE.
WADEY WILSON, DEADPOOL PREVIOUSLY RECORDED.
THESE X-MEN WILL DIE TODAY.
THEY JUST WILL.

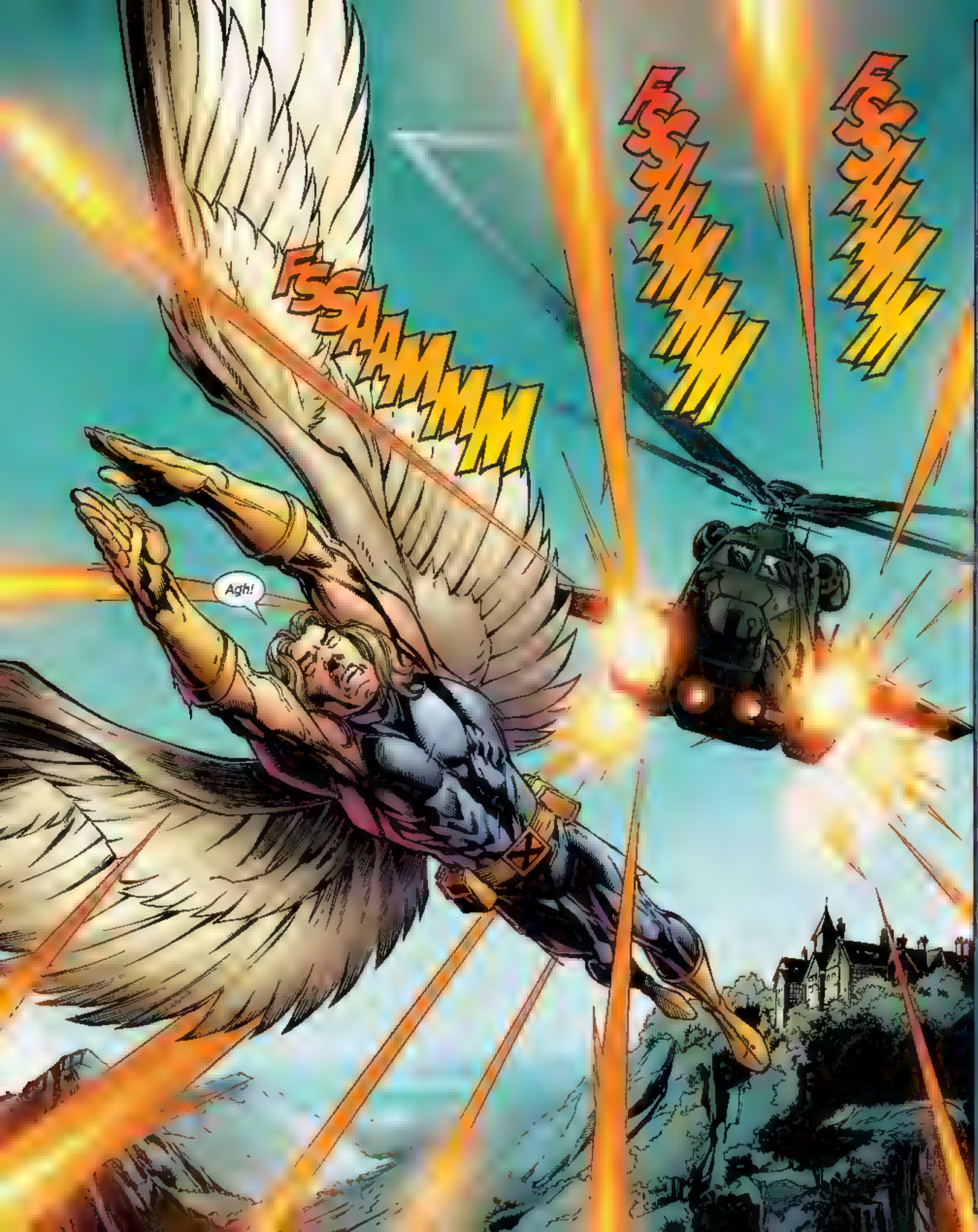

SEE, THESE MUTANTS, THESE X-MEN KIDS, THEY WERE BORN LIKE THAT.
THEY DIDN'T CHOOSE BEING A MUTANT. THEY DIDN'T EARN THE RIGHT TO BE DIFFERENT OR SO-CALLED HOMO SUPERIOR.
THEY WERE BORN THAT WAY. THEY HAD NO CHOICE.
WADEY WILSON, DEADPOOL PREVIOUSLY RECORDED.
WE? US? WE HAD A CHOICE AND WE TOOK IT.
WE CHOSE TO STAND UP FOR THOSE DUDES WHO CAN'T, AND WE WILL PUT THESE FREAKS DOWN.
THAT'S WHAT WE'RE FIGHTING FOR.
OUR DESIRE TO DESTROY THEM IS STRONGER THAN ANYTHING THEY COULD POSSIBLY IMAGINE.
FILE FOOTAGE
JUST BY OUR EXISTENCE... THEY LOSE.
WHEN THIS OPPORTUNITY CAME OUR WAY...
I KNEW WE HAD TO DO THIS.
WE HAD TO MAKE A SHOW OF IT.
WADEY WILSON, DEADPOOL PREVIOUSLY RECORDED.
MAGNETO, XAVIER, ALL THESE KIDS, THEY'RE ALL THE SAME.
THEY ACTUALLY THINK THEY'RE BETTER THAN US?!
THEY THINK THEY'RE THE NEXT STEP IN HUMAN EVOLUTION?!
WADEY WILSON, DEADPOOL PREVIOUSLY RECORDED.
ARE YOU KIDDING ME WITH THIS? CAN YOU BELIEVE THAT??
SOMEONE COULD BE SUCH A COMPLETE GENETIC DISASTER, SUCH A PERVERSION OF GOD AND NATURE'S WILL, THEY COULD LOOK IN THE MIRROR AND SEE THAT, AND YET THINK, "YEAH, I'M THE NEXT STEP IN EVOLUTION."
WADEY WILSON, DEADPOOL PREVIOUSLY RECORDED.
MY GRANDPA SAYS THEY HAD A WORD FOR MUTANTS IN HIS DAY.
THEY CALLED THEM "CARNIVAL FREAKS" THAT YOU PUT IN THE CARNIVAL FREAK SHOW.
YEAH.
WADEY WILSON, DEADPOOL PREVIOUSLY RECORDED.
HMM? HOW DID WE GET THE X-MEN HERE?
WELL, WE COULDN'T DO ANYTHING ILLEGAL OR NOTHING LIKE THAT.
THERE'S INTERNATIONAL LAW. THERE'S AMERICAN LAWS.
(WHATEVER.)
WE HAD A RECON UNIT ON THEM AT THAT SO-CALLED SCHOOL OF THEIRS IN NEW YORK.
WADEY WILSON, DEADPOOL PREVIOUSLY RECORDED.
(IT'S A TERRORIST CAMP, IS WHAT IT IS...)
AND THE SECOND THEY LEFT AMERICA- FLEW THEMSELVES INTO OPEN WATER- WE GRABBED THEM.
THE SOVEREIGN NATION OF GENOSHA, WHICH KRAKOA IS AN ISLAND OFF OF, SANCTIONED AND FUNDED THE ENTIRE OPERATION.
THESE KIDS BROKE INTERNATIONAL LAW.
WADEY WILSON, DEADPOOL PREVIOUSLY RECORDED.
Don't take this fight head on!!
We're outmanned and outgunned and this setting isn't conducive to most of our power types.
Go!!

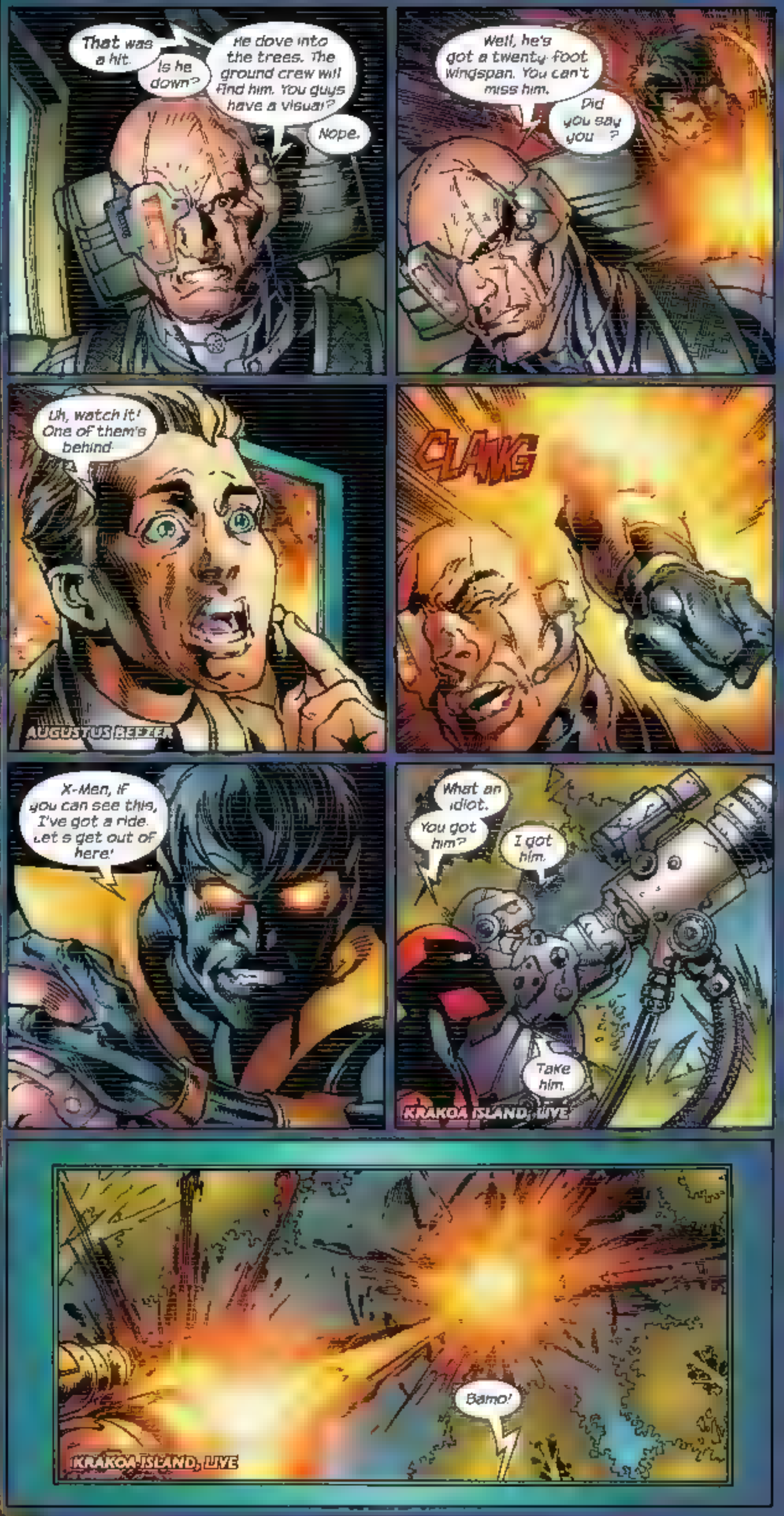

Don't let up, let them— whoah!
BAMF!
You think we will just lie down and let you—!
Ak!
It's the blue smelly one...what's his face?
You should'a listened to your team captain, Cyclops, and ran like hell, Furby!
Kkgg
Yeah, I know.
WADEY WILSON, DEADPOOL PREVIOUSLY RECORDED.
ME? I'D RATHER JUST SLICE THEIR THROATS WHILE THEY SLEEP IN THEIR BEDS.
WHACK 'EM ON THE HEAD WITH A MALLET AND BE DONE WITH IT.
BUT THAT'S NOT WHAT THIS SHOW IS ABOUT.
WADEY WILSON, DEADPOOL PREVIOUSLY RECORDED.
THEY'RE ANIMALS. AND THAT'S WHAT YOU DO WITH ANIMALS.
YOU HUNT THEM FOR SPORT.
PLUS, DOING IT ON TV LIKE THIS TELLS THE OTHER MUTANTS THE TRUTH.
THAT THEY CAN DRESS LIKE US, THEY CAN WALK AROUND AMONG US, BUT THEY ARE NOT US.
THEY ARE NOT HUMAN.
WADEY WILSON, DEADPOOL PREVIOUSLY RECORDED.
AND SOON, AMERICA AND EUROPE WILL UNDERSTAND THIS, TOO.
THEY'LL GET OVER THEMSELVES AND START AIRING THIS BROADCAST AND START PUNISHING THEIR MUTANTS LIKE WE DO.
THEY'LL CATCH UP.
WADEY WILSON, DEADPOOL PREVIOUSLY RECORDED.
THE BIG GUY WHO RUNS THE SHOW TOLD ME THE ONLINE PODCAST FOR THIS GETS DOWNLOADED MORE IN AMERICA THAN ANYWHERE ELSE IN THE WORLD.
AND WHY IS THAT, YA THINK?
Oops, I'm running like a girl the wrong way.
Danke!
Don't mention it, Nightcrawler.
I was getting shot at by crazy goons, anyhow.
Hey!
Hey, don't leave me!
KRAKOA ISLAND, LIVE
THE WORLD WANTS TO SEE THIS.
THEY WANT TO FEEL LIKE THEY ARE RULING THE EARTH, BECAUSE THEY ARE!
WE RULE THE EARTH!! HUMANS!! WHY DO WE HAVE TO FEEL GUILTY ABOUT THIS?
WADEY WILSON, DEADPOOL PREVIOUSLY RECORDED.
MAN, I WISH MAGNETO WAS HERE FOR THIS!
I WOULD LOVE, LOVE, LOVE, LOVE TO EAT THAT GUY'S FACE OFF.
BUT THESE X-BABIES WILL DO JUST AS—
AUGUSTUS BEEZER
WHUP! WE'RE GETTING READY TO GO LIVE INTO THE BATTLEFIELD.
THERE'S A LOT GOING ON, INCLUDING THE SURPRISING APPEARANCE OF SPIDER-MAN.
AUGUSTUS BEEZER
WADEY?? SERGEANT WILSON?
CAN YOU HEAR ME?
ARE YOU THERE?

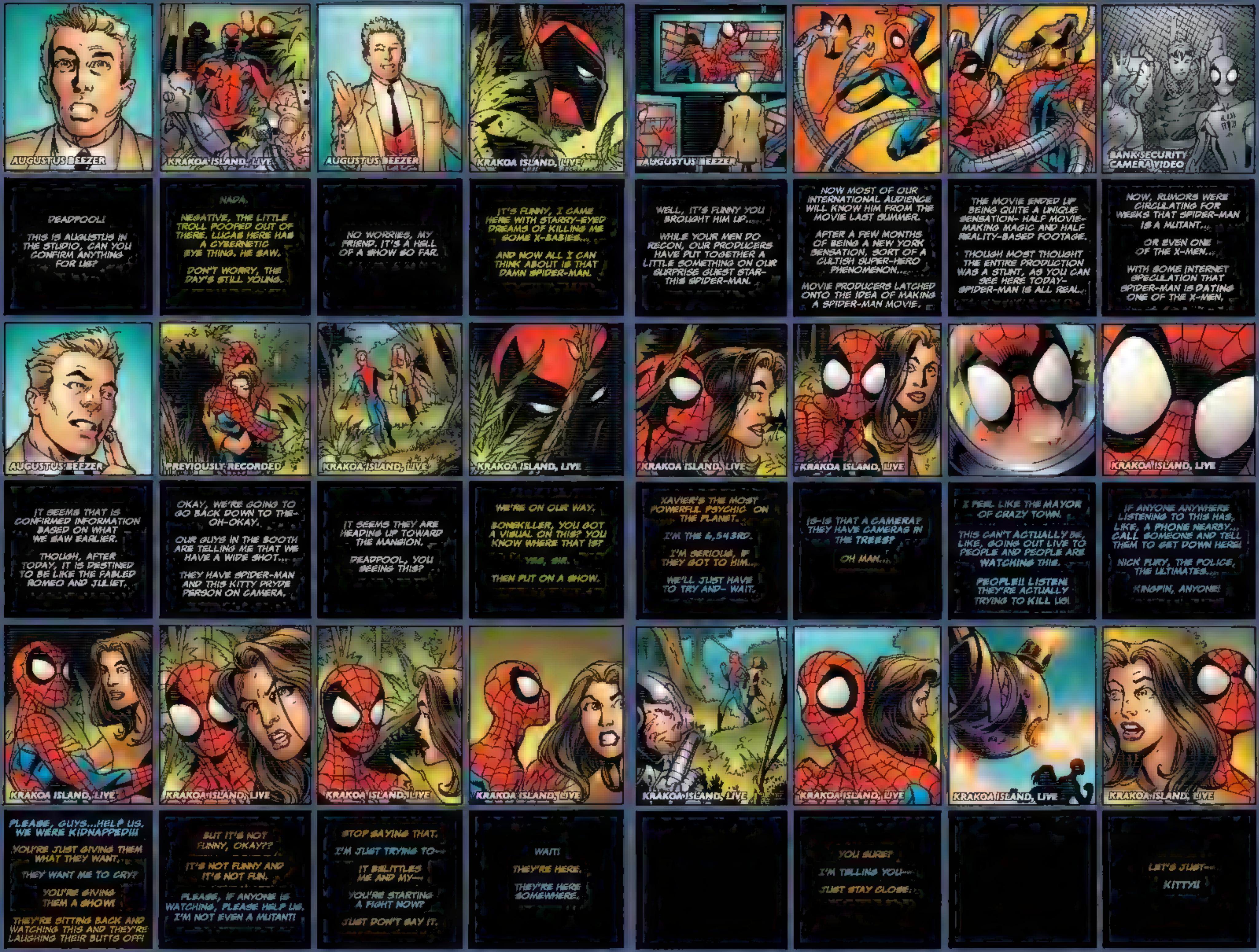

Yeah, I can hear you.
KRAKOA ISLAND, LIVE
What's going on down there? Is that really THE Spider-Man?
AUGUSTUS BEEZER
What can I tell ya? Bonus.
He was with the team when we detained them, so we took him, too.
KRAKOA ISLAND, LIVE
Is Spider-Man a mutant?
AUGUSTUS BEEZER
Looks like.
Either way, the guy just zapped me but good, just now.
He ain't walkin' out of here. Nosireebob.
KRAKOA ISLAND, LIVE
What can you tell us about this Spider-Man?
AUGUSTUS BEEZER
I just told ya everything I know.
He's here and I'm gonna twist his head around like a screw-cap.
KRAKOA ISLAND, LIVE
Hold on just a second there, Deadpool.
I'm getting word from the control room.
Okay, okay. Spider-Man and one of the X-Men are in range of one of our remote cameras, and we're picking up a live feed.
We'll get right back to you.
AUGUSTUS BEEZER
Oh man! Oh man!
What is going on?
They said they're filming this? Is that what they said??
This is just nuts. I can't catch my breath.
KRAKOA ISLAND, LIVE
Let's just swing on out of here and call the cops. We'll call Nick Fury.
Fury hates you.
Who else can I call?
I could click my heels.
Do that, then.
KRAKOA ISLAND, LIVE
Didn't wear my ruby slippers. Listen, P--
Shh! Don't use my real name
Okay.
If they're filming-- there are microphones.
Got it. Don't break up with me
KRAKOA ISLAND, LIVE
What?
I got you into this. Don't break up with me. It was an accident.
Well, duh.
KRAKOA ISLAND, LIVE
You're not mad?
Of course I'm mad. But you didn't do this. Don't be nuts. Let's just get out of here.
I'm so sorry.
Believe me, you'll be breaking up with me after I'm grounded for the next seven years.
KRAKOA ISLAND, LIVE
I'm so sorry.
You know who these guys are?
Never heard of them, but I know what this island is and we have to get off it, like ten minutes ago
KRAKOA ISLAND, LIVE
KRAKOA ISLAND, LIVE
Oh no.
What?
Professor Xavier? What did they do with Professor Xavier??
KRAKOA ISLAND, LIVE
What if he--?!
Oh no.
Spider-sense!!
KRAKOA ISLAND, LIVE

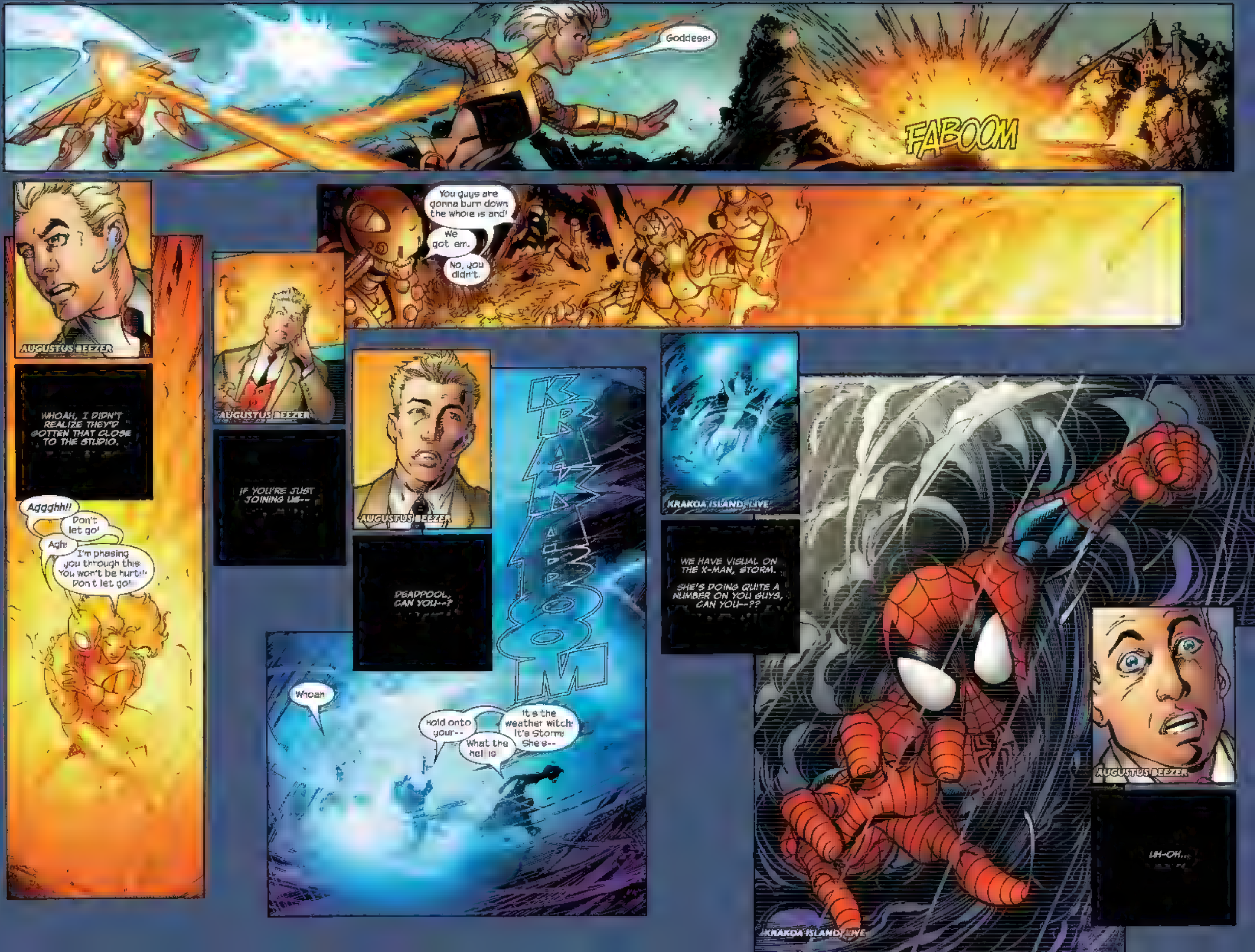

Jeez
You're going to break up with me.
FABOOM
So close
Not even.
KRAKOA ISLAND, LIVE
It ain't over yet.
KRAKOA ISLAND, LIVE
Okay.
We're going to cut back and forth and around the battlefield now, to see what's going on with the mutants.
AUGUSTUS BEEZER
We should use the genetic thingamajig we used to take them down and bring them here in the first place.
Tell Deadpool. He's the only one who can do it.
Shh! You guys hear that explosion?
KRAKOA ISLAND, LIVE
Shut it. They're all around us
Who?
KRAKOA ISLAND, LIVE
You guys-
Shh!
KRAKOA ISLAND, LIVE
Who are you people?!

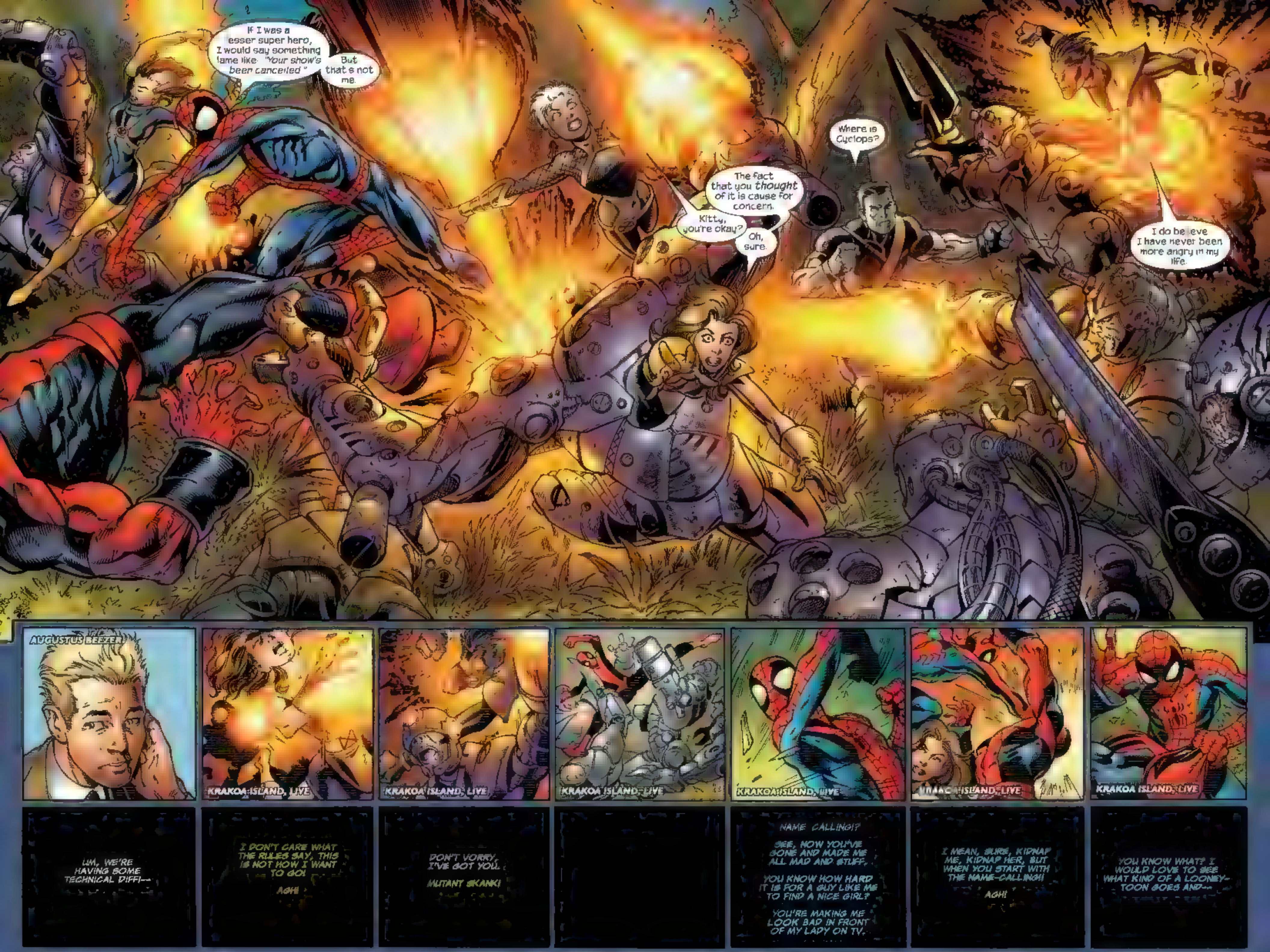

Who, us?
AARRGHH!!
FSHAAAM
AUGUSTUS BEEZER
OH, THAT HAD TO HURT.
KRAKOA ISLAND, LIVE
LOOK AT THIS, KIDS.
THIS IS THE FUTURE OF MANKIND.
AUGUSTUS BEEZER
GOOD ONE, 'POOL.
THAT'S X-MEN TEAM LEADER SCOTT SUMMERS, WHO CALLS HIMSELF CYCLOPS.
WITHOUT THEIR LEADER, THE X-MEN SURELY ARE RUNNING SCARED NOW.
WHO'S NEXT, DEADPOOL?
KRAKOA ISLAND, LIVE
I'M GETTING WORD FROM COPTER TWO. WE GOT A SIGHTING. WHADAYA GOT, TIGER?
YEAH, WE GOT THE WINGED ONE. WE ARE SO FAR UP HIS--
WHOA! WHOA, DID YOU SEE THAT?
AUGUSTUS BEEZER
WE SURE DID, COPTER ONE. THAT'S THE ANGEL.
WE HAD HIM HERE IN THE STUDIO ON OUR LAST BROADCAST. YOU GOT HIM IN YOUR SIGHTS.
WATCH THIS!

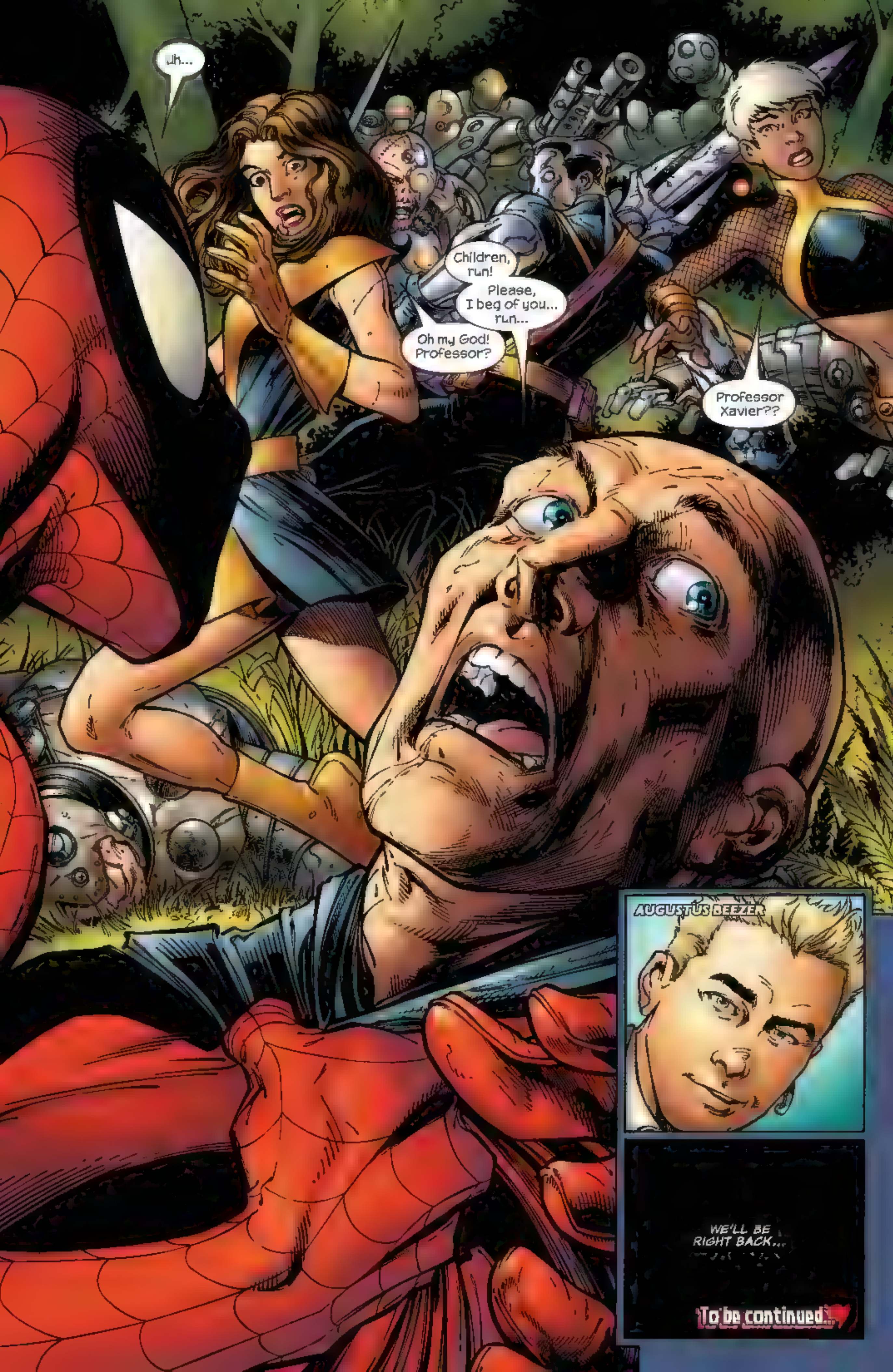

FSSAAMMMM
FSSAAMMMMM
FSSAAMMMMM
Agh!


That was a hit.
Is he down?
He dove into the trees. The ground crew will find him. You guys have a visual?
Nope.
Well, he's got a twenty-foot wingspan. You can't miss him.
Did you say you ?
Uh, watch it! One of them's behind
AUGUSTUS BEEZER
CLANG
X-Men, if you can see this, I've got a ride. Let's get out of here!
What an idiot.
You got him?
I got him.
Take him.
KRAKOA ISLAND, LIVE
KRAKOA ISLAND, LIVE
Bang!


AUGUSTUS BEEZER
DEADPOOL! THIS IS AUGUSTUS IN THE STUDIO, CAN YOU CONFIRM ANYTHING FOR US?
KRAKOA ISLAND, LIVE
NADA.
NEGATIVE, THE LITTLE TROLL POOFED OUT OF THERE. LUCAS HERE HAS A CYBERNETIC EYE THING. HE SAW.
DON'T WORRY, THE DAY'S STILL YOUNG.
AUGUSTUS BEEZER
NO WORRIES, MY FRIEND. IT'S A HELL OF A SHOW SO FAR.
KRAKOA ISLAND, LIVE
IT'S FUNNY, I CAME HERE WITH STARRY-EYED DREAMS OF KILLING ME SOME X-BABIES...
AND NOW ALL I CAN THINK ABOUT IS THAT DAMN SPIDER-MAN.
AUGUSTUS BEEZER
WELL, IT'S FUNNY YOU BROUGHT HIM UP...
WHILE YOUR MEN DO RECON, OUR PRODUCERS HAVE PUT TOGETHER A LITTLE SOMETHING ON OUR SURPRISE GUEST STAR- THIS SPIDER-MAN.
NOW MOST OF OUR INTERNATIONAL AUDIENCE WILL KNOW HIM FROM THE MOVIE LAST SUMMER.
AFTER A FEW MONTHS OF BEING A NEW YORK SENSATION, SORT OF A CULTISH SUPER-HERO PHENOMENON...
MOVIE PRODUCERS LATCHED ONTO THE IDEA OF MAKING A SPIDER-MAN MOVIE.
THE MOVIE ENDED UP BEING QUITE A UNIQUE SENSATION- HALF MOVIE-MAKING MAGIC AND HALF REALITY-BASED FOOTAGE.
THOUGH MOST THOUGHT THE ENTIRE PRODUCTION WAS A STUNT, AS YOU CAN SEE HERE TODAY- SPIDER-MAN IS ALL REAL...
BANK SECURITY CAMERA VIDEO
NOW, RUMORS WERE CIRCULATING FOR WEEKS THAT SPIDER-MAN IS A MUTANT...
OR EVEN ONE OF THE X-MEN...
WITH SOME INTERNET SPECULATION THAT SPIDER-MAN IS DATING ONE OF THE X-MEN.
AUGUSTUS BEEZER
IT SEEMS THAT IS CONFIRMED INFORMATION BASED ON WHAT WE SAW EARLIER.
THOUGH, AFTER TODAY, IT IS DESTINED TO BE LIKE THE FABLED ROMEO AND JULIET.
PREVIOUSLY RECORDED
OKAY, WE'RE GOING TO GO BACK DOWN TO THE- OH-OKAY.
OUR GUYS IN THE BOOTH ARE TELLING ME THAT WE HAVE A WIDE SHOT...
THEY HAVE SPIDER-MAN AND THIS KITTY PRYDE PERSON ON CAMERA.
KRAKOA ISLAND, LIVE
IT SEEMS THEY ARE HEADING UP TOWARD THE MANSION.
DEADPOOL, YOU SEEING THIS?
KRAKOA ISLAND, LIVE
WE'RE ON OUR WAY.
BONEKILLER, YOU GOT A VISUAL ON THIS? YOU KNOW WHERE THAT IS?
YES, SIR.
THEN PUT ON A SHOW.
KRAKOA ISLAND, LIVE
XAVIER'S THE MOST POWERFUL PSYCHIC ON THE PLANET.
I'M THE 6,543RD.
I'M SERIOUS. IF THEY GOT TO HIM...
WE'LL JUST HAVE TO TRY AND- WAIT.
KRAKOA ISLAND, LIVE
IS-IS THAT A CAMERA? THEY HAVE CAMERAS IN THE TREES?
OH MAN...
I FEEL LIKE THE MAYOR OF CRAZY TOWN.
THIS CAN'T ACTUALLY BE, LIKE, GOING OUT LIVE TO PEOPLE AND PEOPLE ARE WATCHING THIS.
PEOPLE!! LISTEN! THEY'RE ACTUALLY TRYING TO KILL US!
KRAKOA ISLAND, LIVE
IF ANYONE ANYWHERE LISTENING TO THIS HAS, LIKE, A PHONE NEARBY... CALL SOMEONE AND TELL THEM TO GET DOWN HERE!
NICK FURY, THE POLICE, THE ULTIMATES...
KINGPIN, ANYONE!
KRAKOA ISLAND, LIVE
PLEASE, GUYS...HELP US. WE WERE KIDNAPPED!!!
YOU'RE JUST GIVING THEM WHAT THEY WANT.
THEY WANT ME TO CRY?
YOU'RE GIVING THEM A SHOW!
THEY'RE SITTING BACK AND WATCHING THIS AND THEY'RE LAUGHING THEIR BUTTS OFF!
KRAKOA ISLAND, LIVE
BUT IT'S NOT FUNNY, OKAY??
IT'S NOT FUNNY AND IT'S NOT FUN.
PLEASE, IF ANYONE IS WATCHING, PLEASE HELP US. I'M NOT EVEN A MUTANT!
KRAKOA ISLAND, LIVE
STOP SAYING THAT.
I'M JUST TRYING TO--
IT BELITTLES ME AND MY--
YOU'RE STARTING A FIGHT NOW?
JUST DON'T SAY IT.
KRAKOA ISLAND, LIVE
WAIT!
THEY'RE HERE.
THEY'RE HERE SOMEWHERE.
KRAKOA ISLAND, LIVE
KRAKOA ISLAND, LIVE
YOU SURE?
I'M TELLING YOU--
JUST STAY CLOSE.
KRAKOA ISLAND, LIVE
KRAKOA ISLAND, LIVE
LET'S JUST--
KITTY!!


Goddess!
FABOOM
You guys are gonna burn down the whole island!
We got em.
No, you didn't.
AUGUSTUS BEEZER
WHOAH, I DIDN'T REALIZE THEY'D GOTTEN THAT CLOSE TO THE STUDIO.
Aggghh!!
Don't let go!
Agh!
I'm phasing you through this! You won't be hurt! Don't let go!
AUGUSTUS BEEZER
IF YOU'RE JUST JOINING US--
AUGUSTUS BEEZER
DEADPOOL, CAN YOU--?
KRAKAKABOOM
Whoah
Hold onto your--
What the hell is
It's the weather witch! It's Storm! She's--
KRAKOA ISLAND, LIVE
WE HAVE VISUAL ON THE X-MAN, STORM.
SHE'S DOING QUITE A NUMBER ON YOU GUYS, CAN YOU--??
AUGUSTUS BEEZER
UH-OH...
KRAKOA ISLAND, LIVE


If I was a lesser super hero, I would say something lame like: "Your show's been canceled."
But that's not me.
Where is Cyclops?
The fact that you thought of it is cause for concern.
Kitty, you're okay?
Oh, sure.
I do believe I have never been more angry in my life.
AUGUSTUS BEEZER
KRAKOA ISLAND, LIVE
KRAKOA ISLAND, LIVE
KRAKOA ISLAND, LIVE
KRAKOA ISLAND, LIVE
KRAKOA ISLAND, LIVE
KRAKOA ISLAND, LIVE
UM, WE'RE HAVING SOME TECHNICAL DIFFI--
I DON'T CARE WHAT THE RULES SAY, THIS IS NOT HOW I WANT TO GO!
AGH!
DON'T VORRY, I'VE GOT YOU.
MUTANT SKANK!
NAME CALLING!?
SEE, NOW YOU'VE GONE AND MADE ME ALL MAD AND STUFF.
YOU KNOW HOW HARD IT IS FOR A GUY LIKE ME TO FIND A NICE GIRL?
YOU'RE MAKING ME LOOK BAD IN FRONT OF MY LADY ON TV.
I MEAN, SURE, KIDNAP ME, KIDNAP HER, BUT WHEN YOU START WITH THE NAME-CALLING!!
AGH!
YOU KNOW WHAT? I WOULD LOVE TO SEE WHAT KIND OF A LOONEY-TOON GOES AND--


Uh...
Children, run!
Please, I beg of you... run...
Oh my God! Professor?
Professor Xavier??
AUGUSTUS BEEZER
WE'LL BE RIGHT BACK...
To be continued...

ULTIMATE
SPIDER-MAN
ISSUE
94
DEADPOOL: PART 4
BENDIS
BAGLEY
DELL
MARVEL

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PREVIOUSLY IN ULTIMATE SPIDER-MAN...

The bite of a genetically-altered spider granted high school student Peter Parker incredible, arachnid-like powers! When a burglar killed his beloved Uncle Ben, a grief-stricken Peter vowed to use his amazing abilities to protect his fellow man. He learned the invaluable lesson that with great power must also come great responsibility...

Having recently broken up with his girlfriend, Mary Jane, Peter started dating Kitty Pryde, member of the super-powered mutant team, the X-Men. In a seemingly-unprovoked attack, Spider-Man—and all the X-Men (plus the visiting Angel)—are ambushed and kidnapped by someone called Deadpool, and his band of cyborg Reavers!

The heroes find themselves on the island of Krakoa, where the X-Men had once gone up against the mutant-hating Mojo, who broadcasts a reality-TV show...in which mutants serve as the world's most dangerous game. As Spidey and the X-Men battle their way through the Reavers, heading for Mojo's broadcast tower, Peter confronts Deadpool and makes a startling discovery...

DEADPOOL

PART 4 of 4

Brian Michael Bendis WRITER
Mark Bagley PENCILER
John Dell w/ Mark McKenna INKERS
Justin Ponsor COLORIST
VC's Cory Petit LETTERER

Tom Valente PRODUCTION
Nicole Boose ASST. EDITOR
John Barber ASSOC. EDITOR
Ralph Macchio EDITOR
Joe Quesada EDITOR IN CHIEF
Dan Buckley PUBLISHER

Cover: Mark Bagley & Richard Isanove

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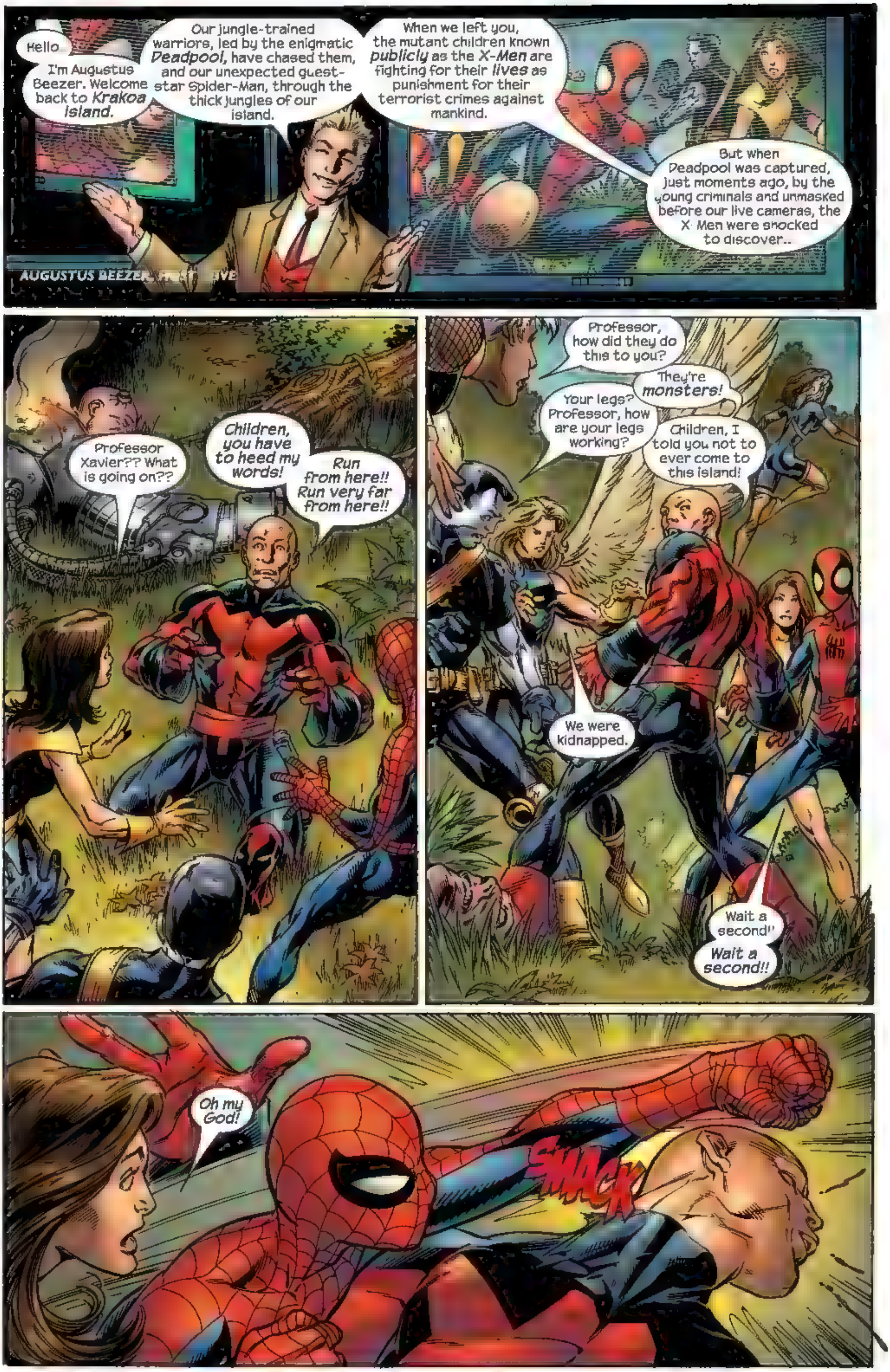
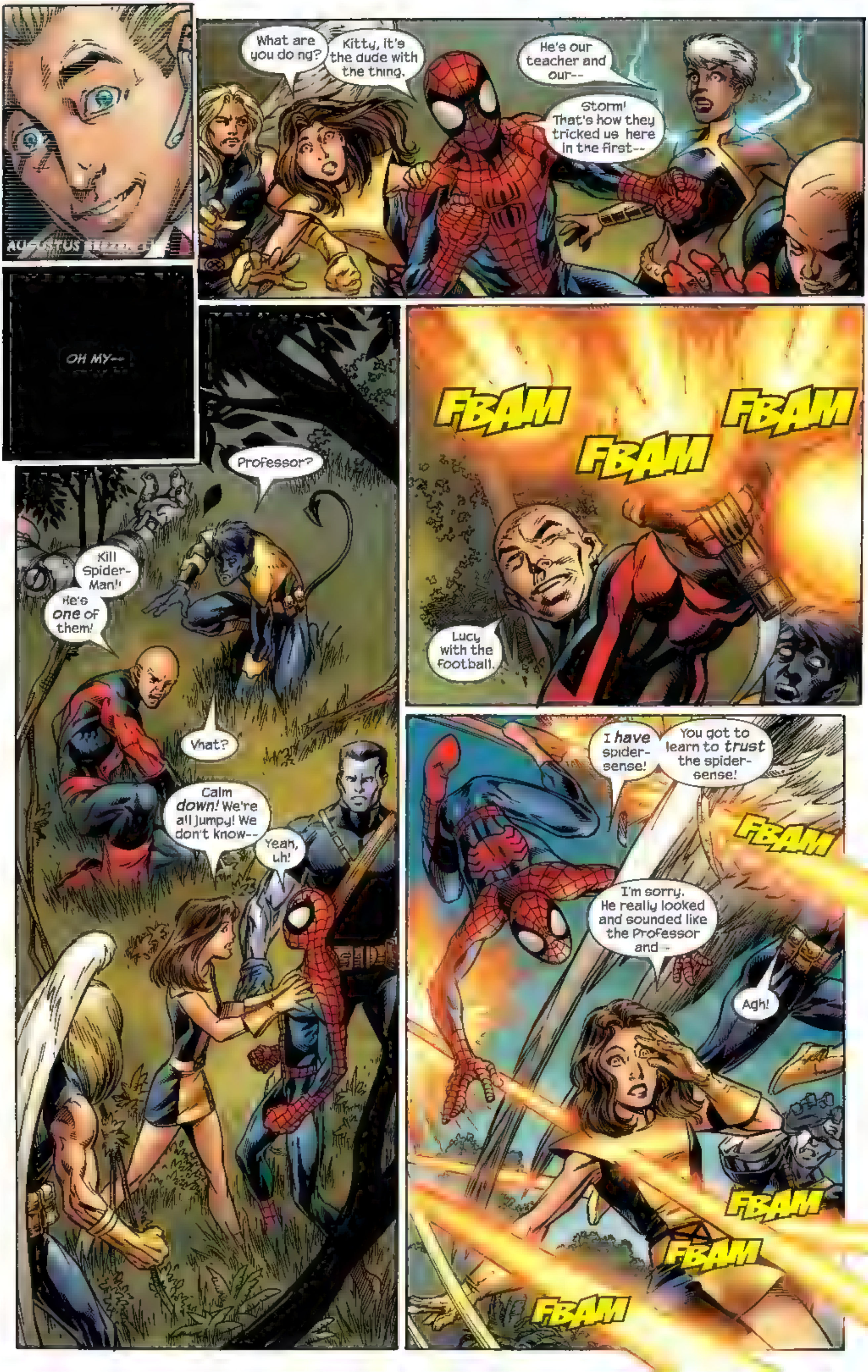
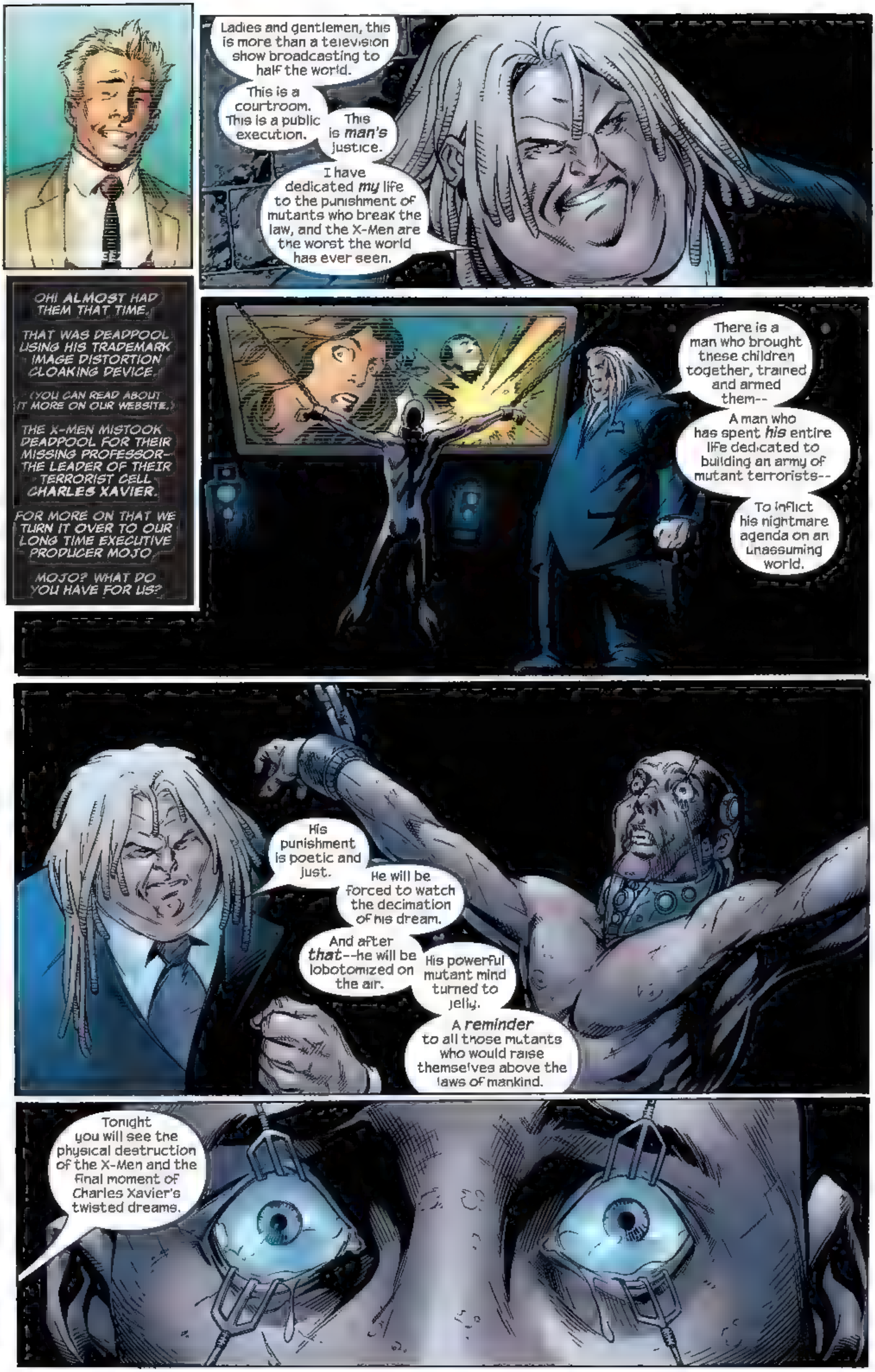
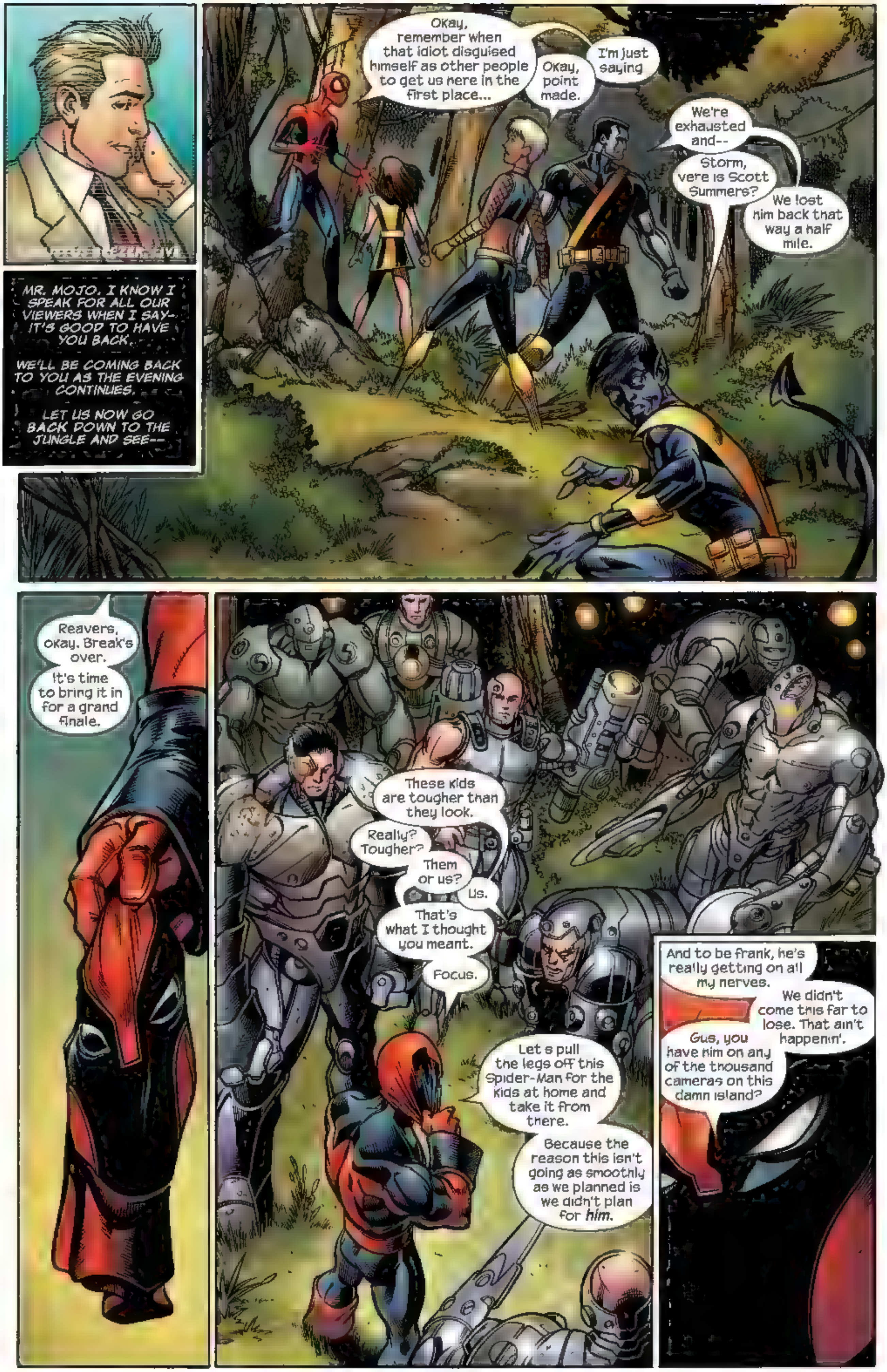
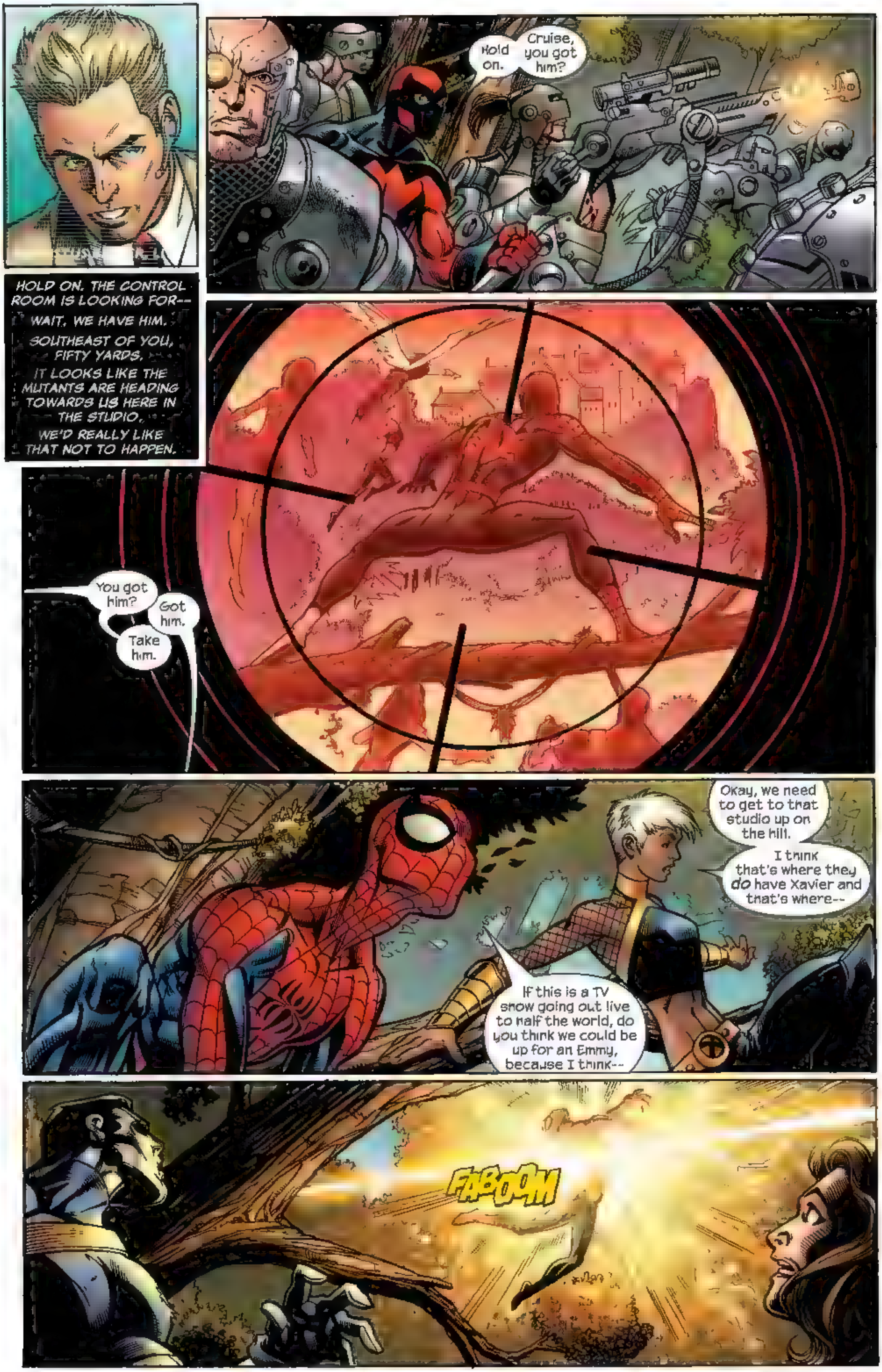
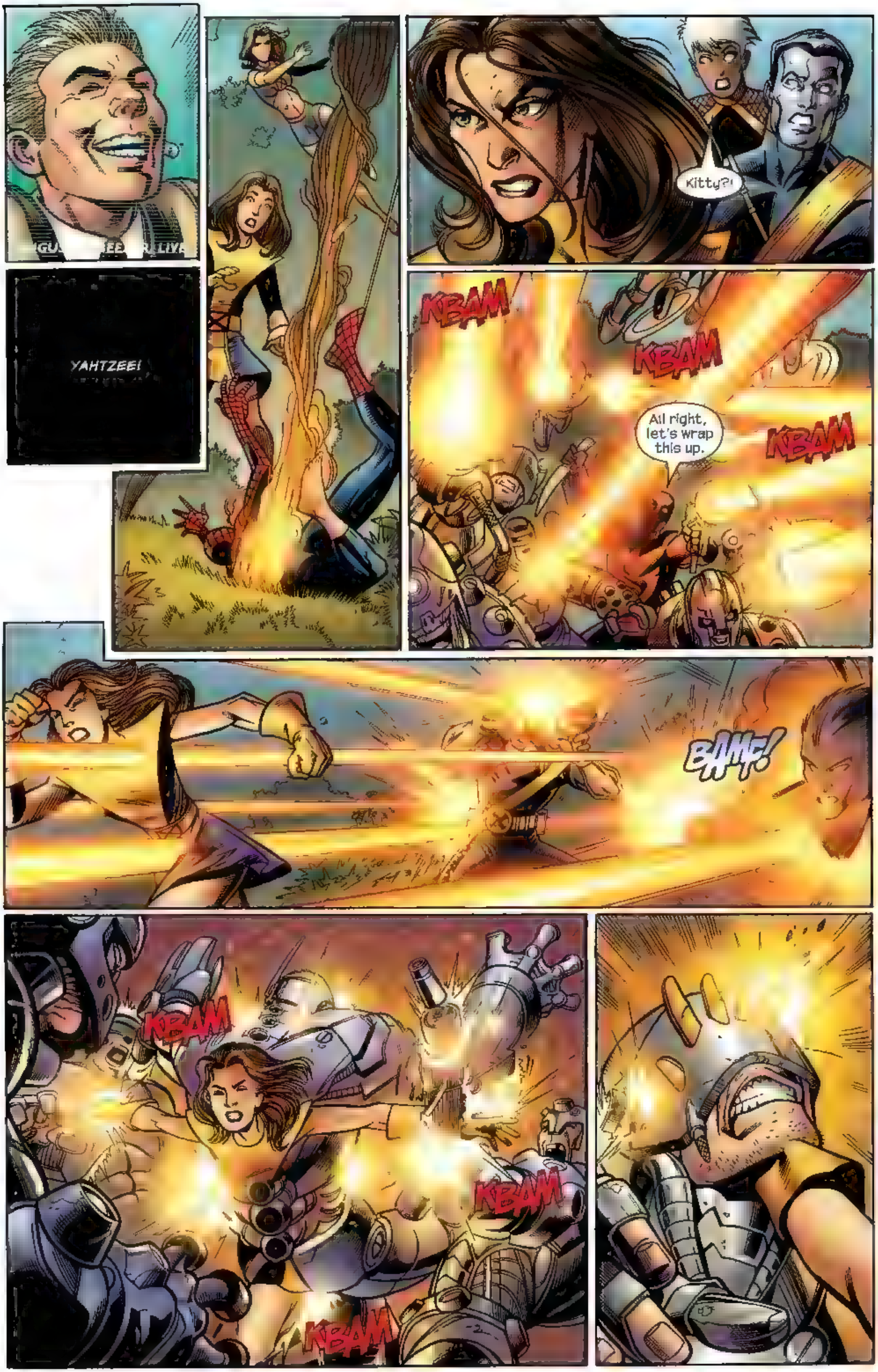

Hello.
I'm Augustus Beezer. Welcome back to *Krakoa Island.*
Our jungle-trained warriors, led by the enigmatic *Deadpool,* have chased them, and our unexpected guest-star Spider-Man, through the thick jungles of our island.
When we left you, the mutant children known *publicly* as the *X-Men* are fighting for their *lives* as punishment for their terrorist crimes against mankind.
But when Deadpool was captured, just moments ago, by the young criminals and unmasked before our live cameras, the X-Men were shocked to discover..
AUGUSTUS BEEZER, HOST LIVE
Professor Xavier?? What is going on??
Children, you have to heed my words!
Run from here!! Run very far from here!!
Professor, how did they do this to you?
They're *monsters!*
Your legs? Professor, how are your legs working?
Children, I told you not to ever come to this island!
We were kidnapped.
Wait a second!!
Wait a second!!
Oh my God!
SMACK

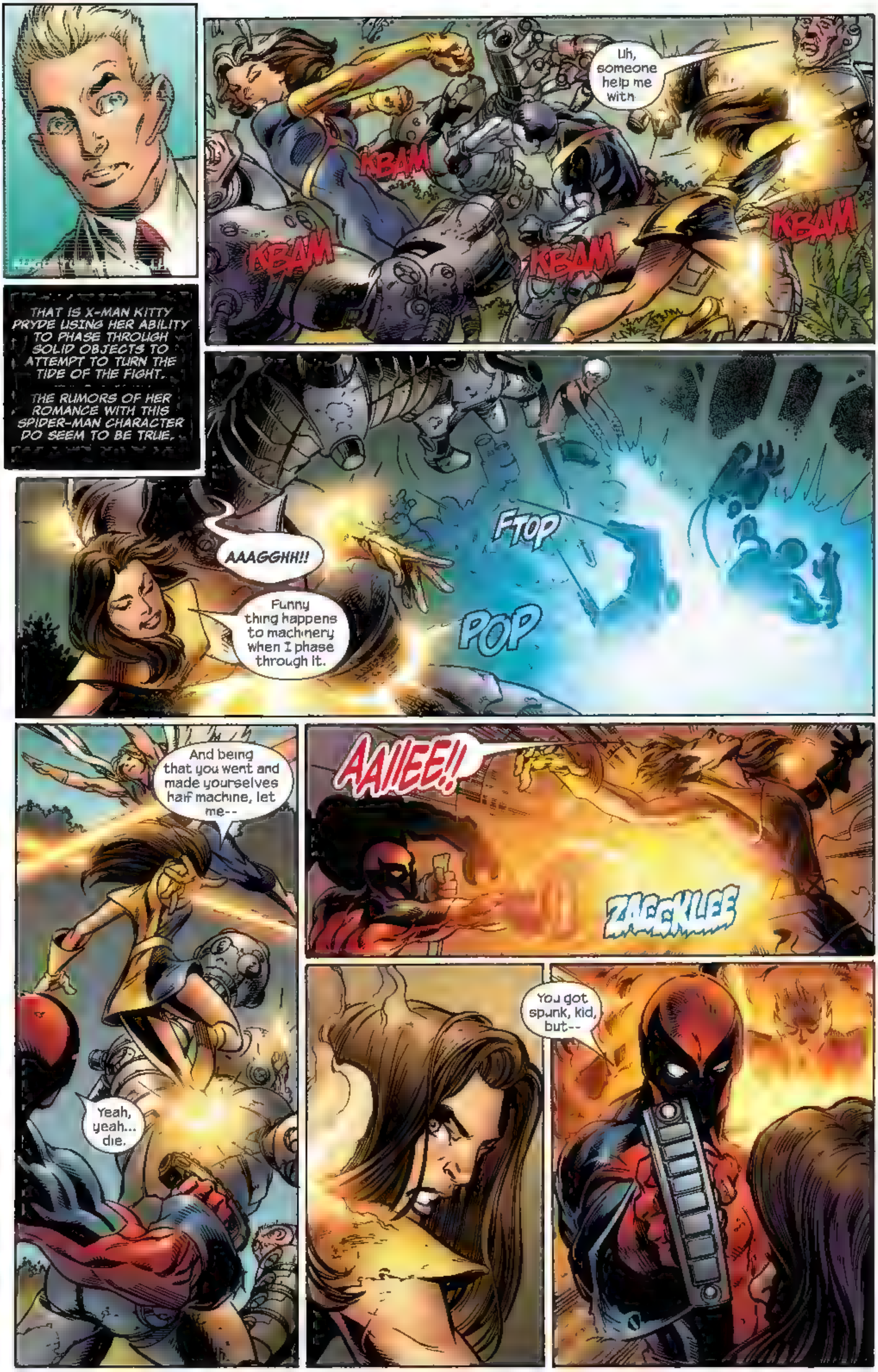

AUGUSTUS
What are you doing?
Kitty, it's the dude with the thing.
He's our teacher and our--
Storm! That's how they tricked us here in the first--
OH MY--
Professor?
Kill Spider-Man!
He's one of them!
Vhat?
Calm down! We're all jumpy! We don't know--
Yeah, uh!
FBAM
FBAM
FBAM
Lucy with the football.
I have spider-sense!
You got to learn to trust the spider-sense!
FBAM
I'm sorry. He really looked and sounded like the Professor and--
Agh!
FBAM
FBAM
FBAM

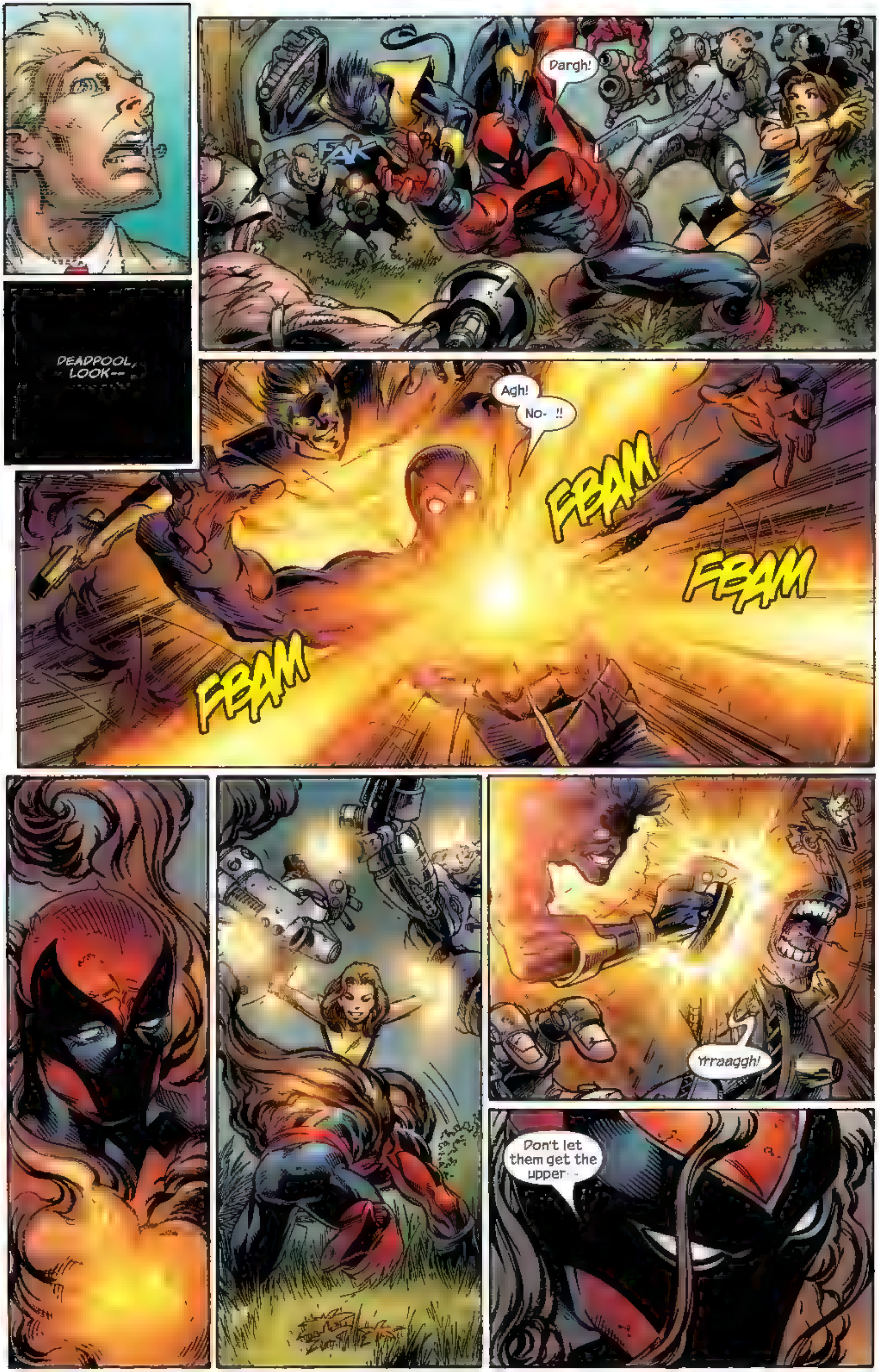

OH! ALMOST HAD THEM THAT TIME.
THAT WAS DEADPOOL USING HIS TRADEMARK IMAGE DISTORTION CLOAKING DEVICE.
(YOU CAN READ ABOUT IT MORE ON OUR WEBSITE.)
THE X-MEN MISTOOK DEADPOOL FOR THEIR MISSING PROFESSOR-- THE LEADER OF THEIR TERRORIST CELL CHARLES XAVIER.
FOR MORE ON THAT WE TURN IT OVER TO OUR LONG TIME EXECUTIVE PRODUCER MOJO.
MOJO? WHAT DO YOU HAVE FOR US?
Ladies and gentlemen, this is more than a television show broadcasting to half the world.
This is a courtroom. This is a public execution.
This is *man's* justice.
I have dedicated *my* life to the punishment of mutants who break the law, and the X-Men are the worst the world has ever seen.
There is a man who brought these children together, trained and armed them--
A man who has spent *his* entire life dedicated to building an army of mutant terrorists--
To inflict his nightmare agenda on an unassuming world.
His punishment is poetic and just.
He will be forced to watch the decimation of his dream.
And after *that*--he will be lobotomized on the air.
His powerful mutant mind turned to jelly.
A *reminder* to all those mutants who would raise themselves above the laws of mankind.
Tonight you will see the physical destruction of the X-Men and the final moment of Charles Xavier's twisted dreams.

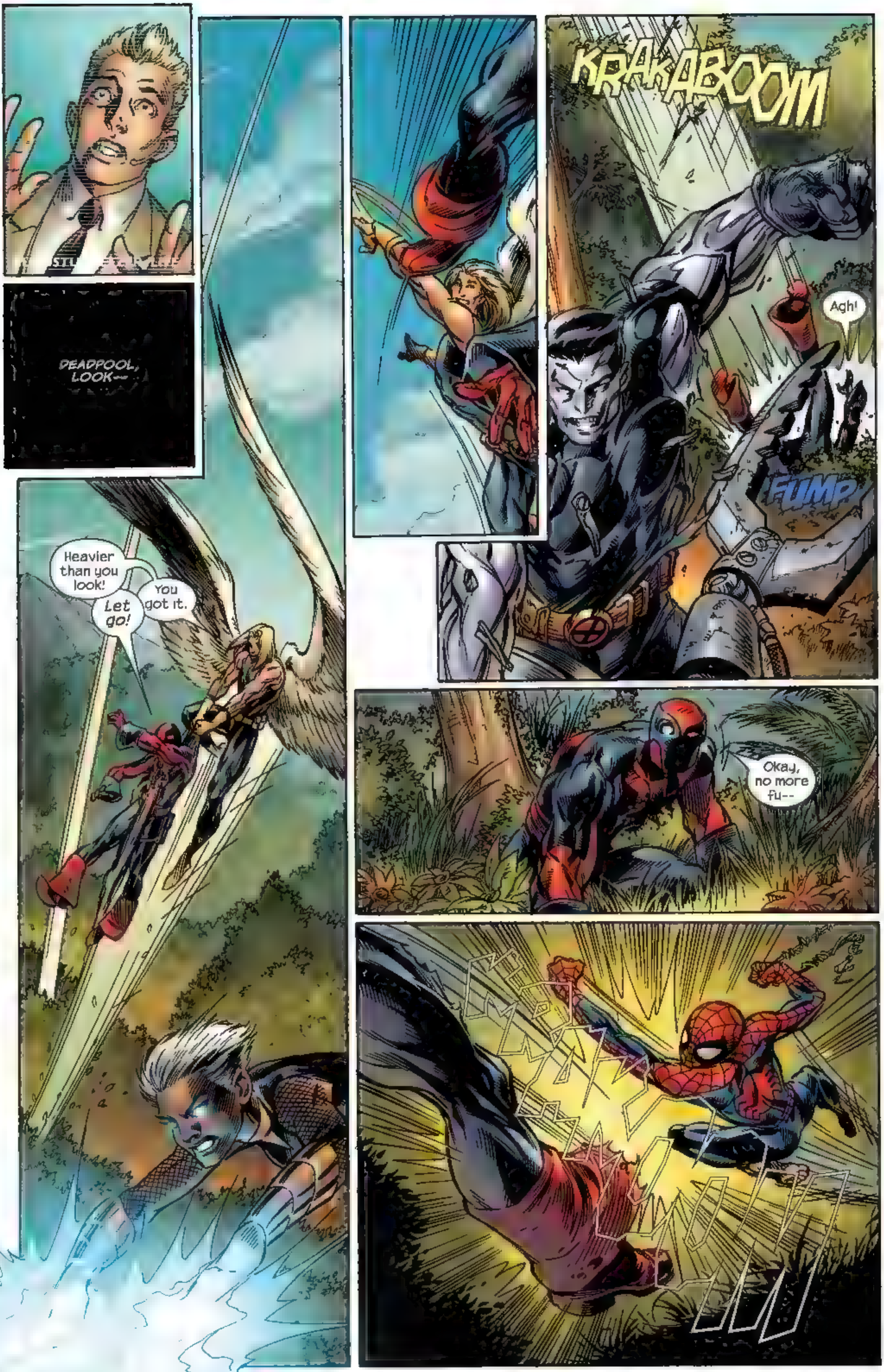

MR. MOJO, I KNOW I SPEAK FOR ALL OUR VIEWERS WHEN I SAY-- IT'S GOOD TO HAVE YOU BACK.
WE'LL BE COMING BACK TO YOU AS THE EVENING CONTINUES.
LET US NOW GO BACK DOWN TO THE JUNGLE AND SEE--
Okay, remember when that idiot disguised himself as other people to get us here in the first place...
I'm just saying
Okay, point made.
We're exhausted and--
Storm, vere is Scott Summers?
We lost him back that way a half mile.
Reavers, okay. Break's over.
It's time to bring it in for a grand finale.
These kids are tougher than they look.
Really? Tougher?
Them or us?
Us.
That's what I thought you meant.
Focus.
Let's pull the legs off this Spider-Man for the kids at home and take it from there.
Because the reason this isn't going as smoothly as we planned is we didn't plan for him.
And to be frank, he's really getting on all my nerves.
We didn't come this far to lose. That ain't happenin'.
Gus, you have him on any of the thousand cameras on this damn island?

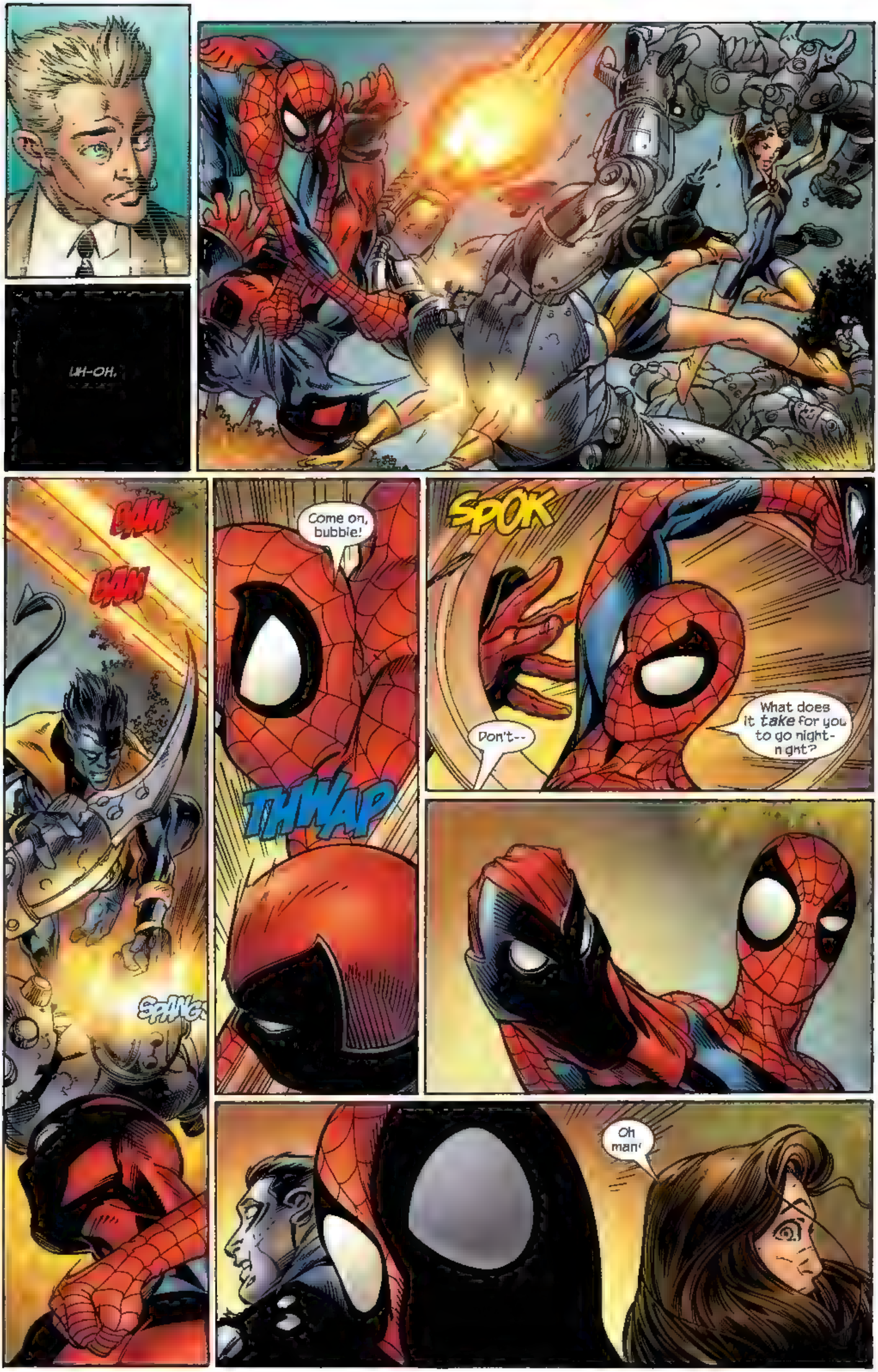

Cruise, you got him?
Hold on.
HOLD ON. THE CONTROL ROOM IS LOOKING FOR--
WAIT. WE HAVE HIM.
SOUTHEAST OF YOU, FIFTY YARDS.
IT LOOKS LIKE THE MUTANTS ARE HEADING TOWARDS US HERE IN THE STUDIO.
WE'D REALLY LIKE THAT NOT TO HAPPEN.
You got him?
Got him.
Take him.
Okay, we need to get to that studio up on the hill.
I think that's where they *do* have Xavier and that's where--
If this is a TV show going out live to half the world, do you think we could be up for an Emmy, because I think--
FABOOM

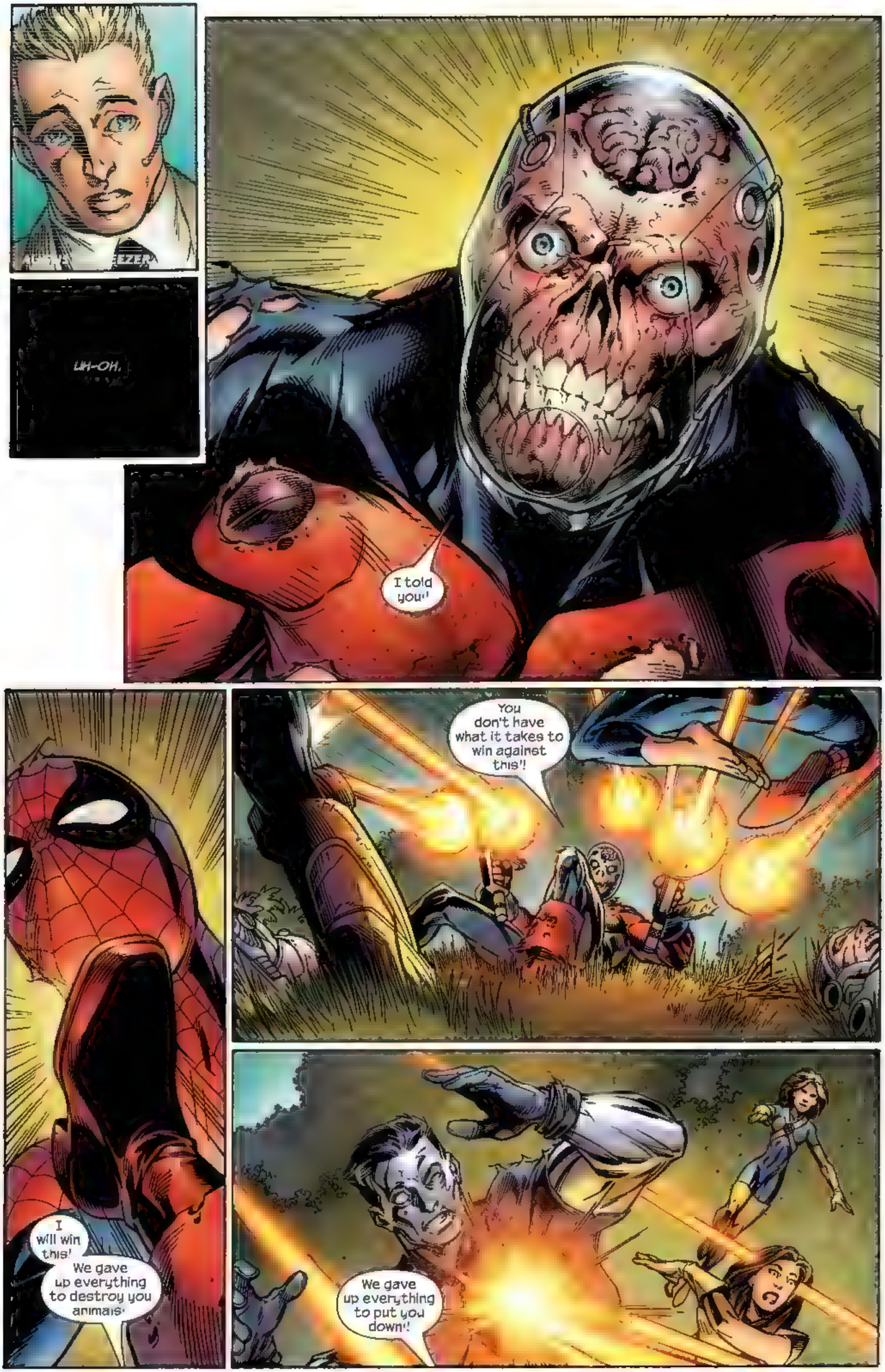

YAHTZEE!
Kitty?!
KBAM
KBAM
All right, let's wrap this up.
KBAM
BAMF!
KBAM
KBAM
KBAM

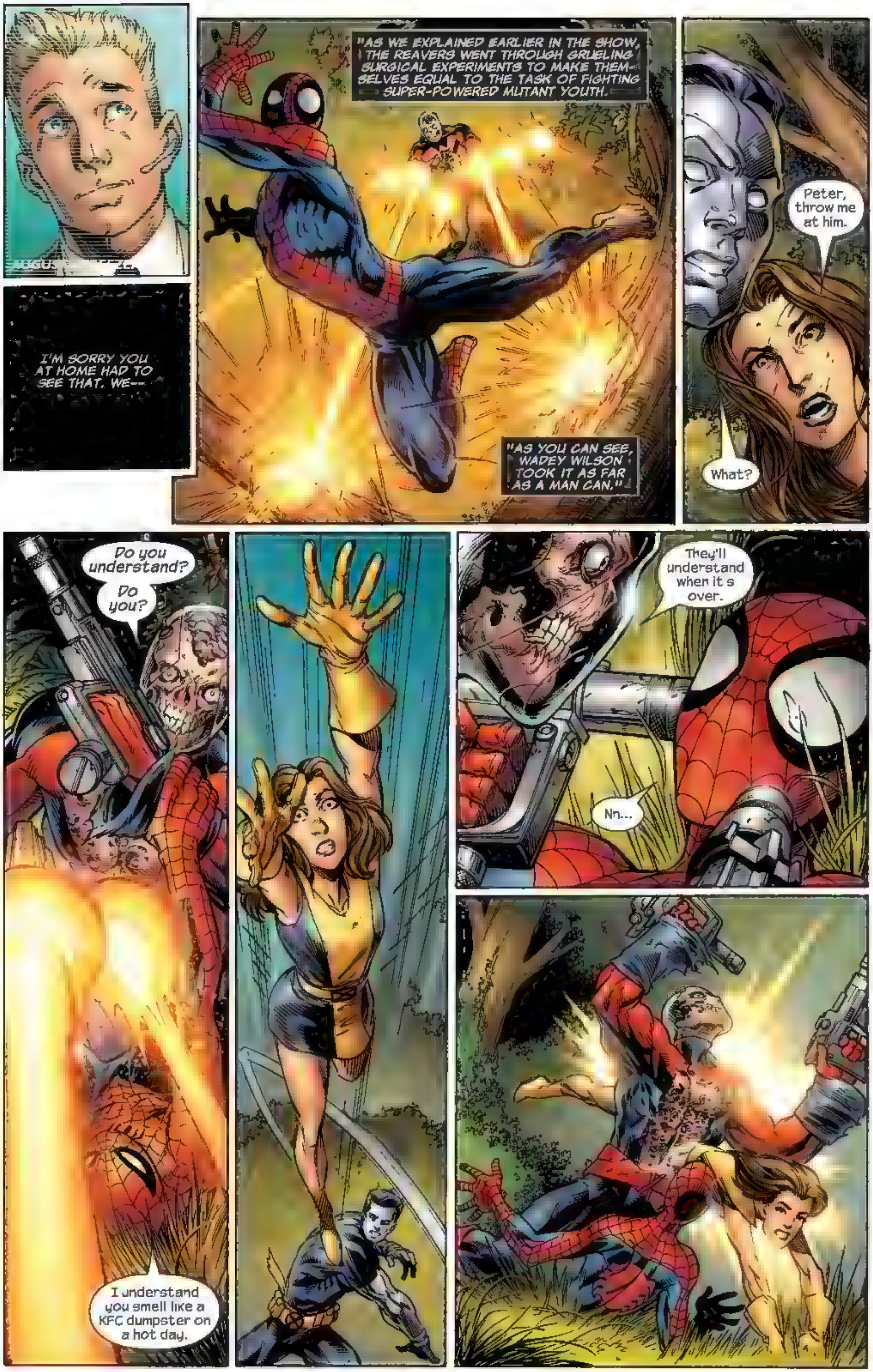

Uh, someone help me with
KBAM
KBAM
KBAM
KBAM
THAT IS X-MAN KITTY PRYDE USING HER ABILITY TO PHASE THROUGH SOLID OBJECTS TO ATTEMPT TO TURN THE TIDE OF THE FIGHT.
THE RUMORS OF HER ROMANCE WITH THIS SPIDER-MAN CHARACTER DO SEEM TO BE TRUE.
AAAGGHH!!
Funny thing happens to machinery when I phase through it.
FTOP
POP
And being that you went and made yourselves half machine, let me--
Yeah, yeah... die.
AAIIEE!!
ZAGCKLEE
You got spunk, kid, but--

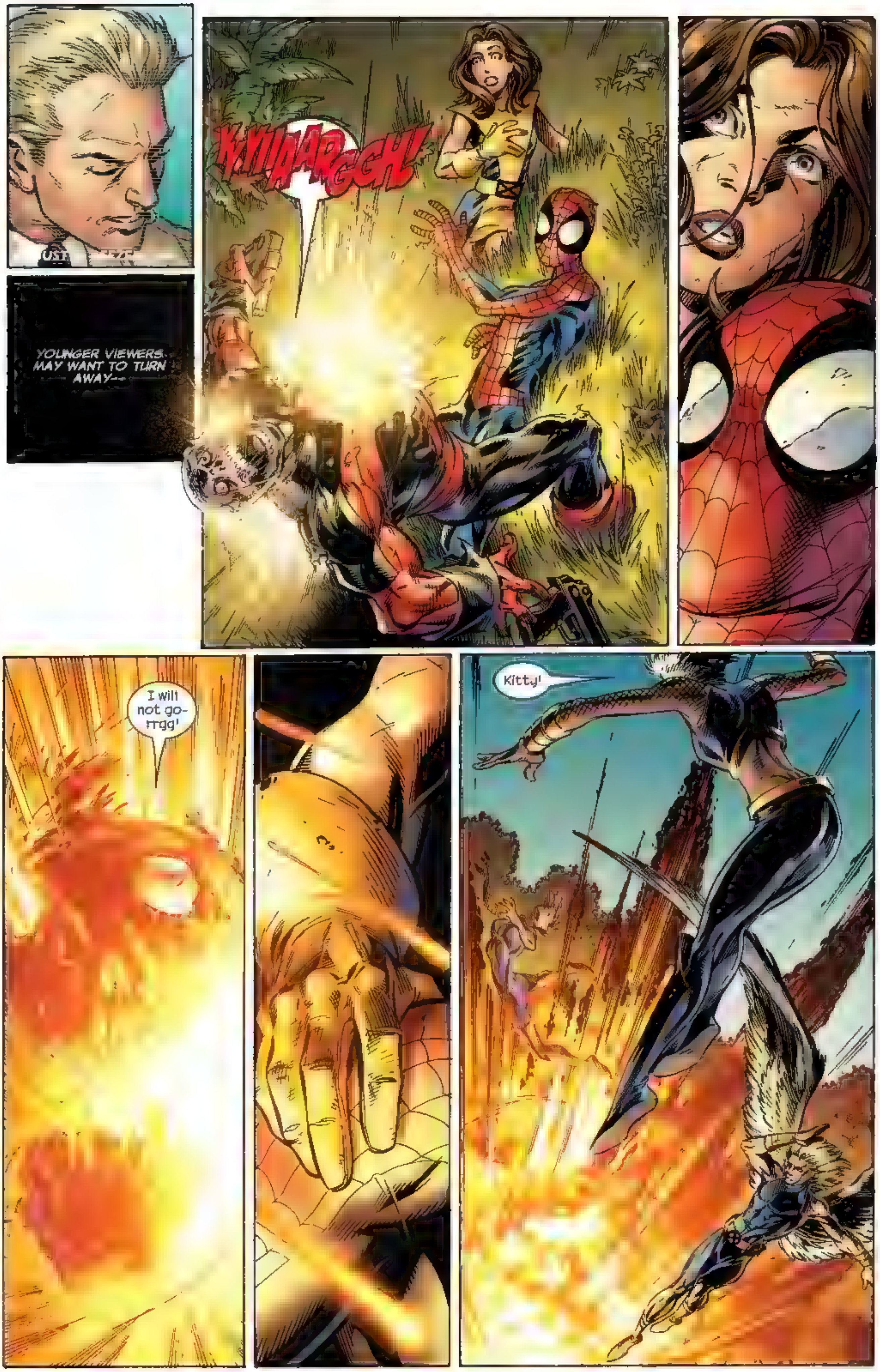

Dargh!
FAK
DEADPOOL, LOOK--
Agh!
No--!!
FBAM
FBAM
FBAM
Yrraaggh!
Don't let them get the upper--

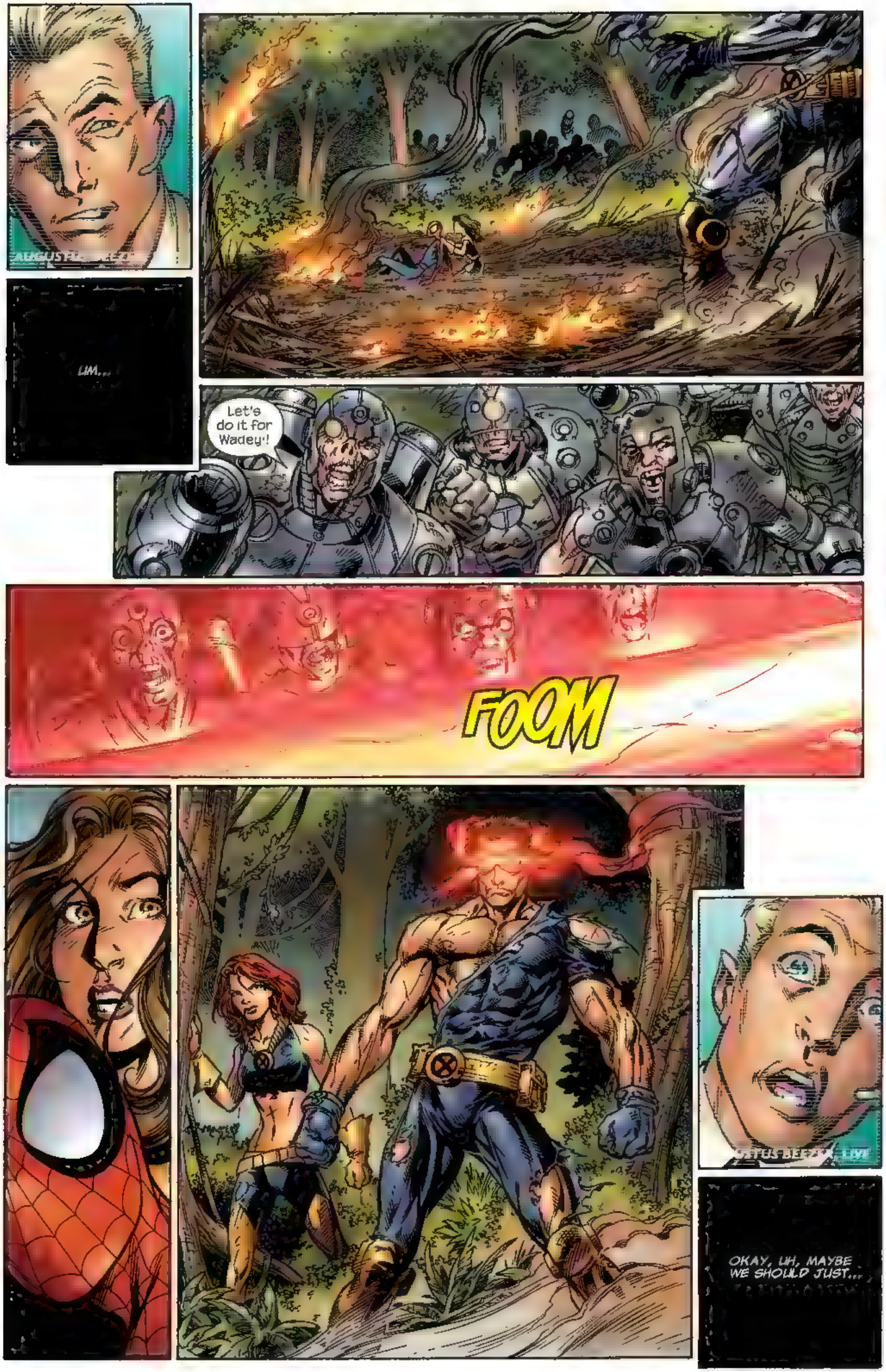

DEADPOOL, LOOK--
Heavier than you look!
Let go!
You got it.
KRAKABOOM
Agh!
FUMP
Okay, no more fu--

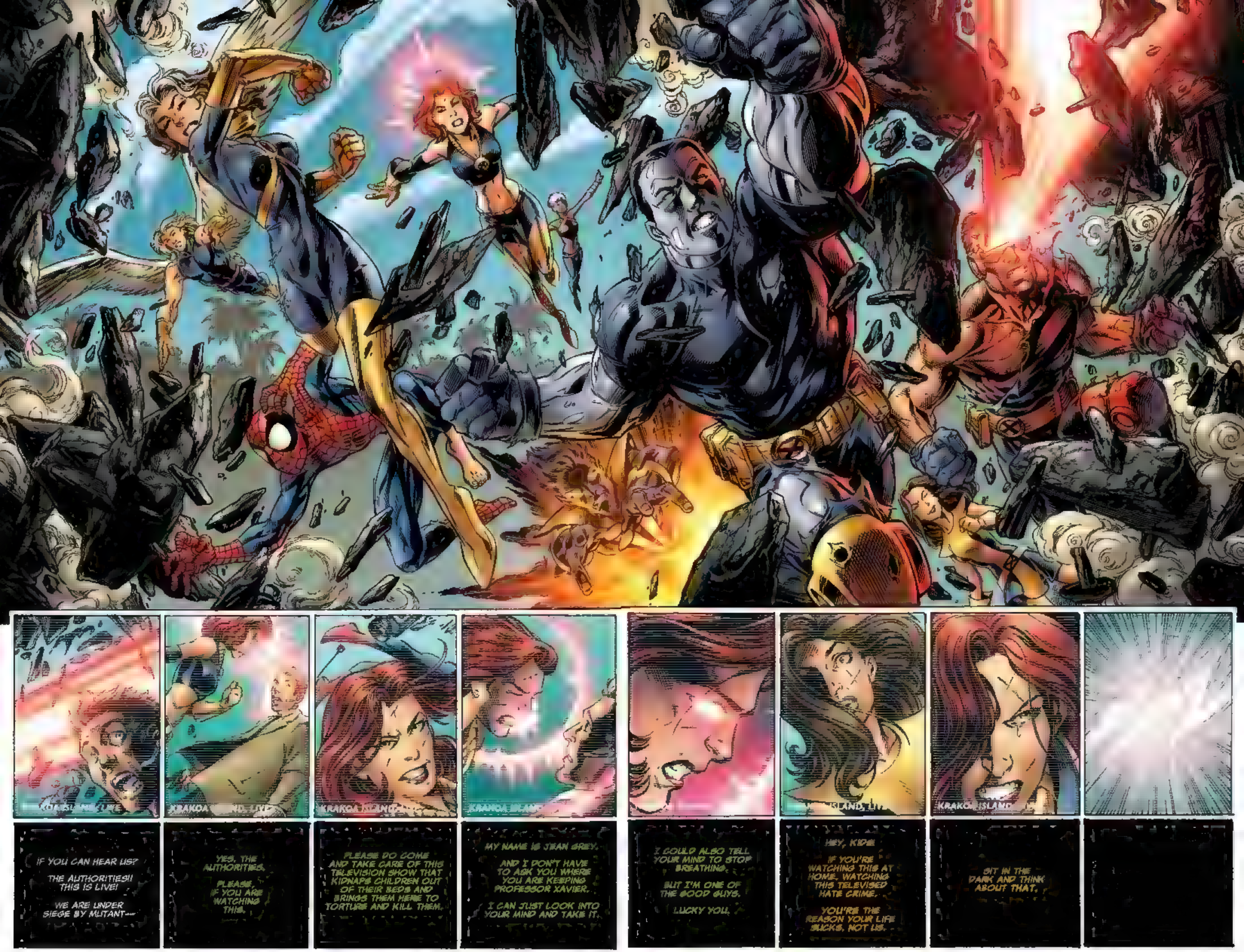

UH-OH.
BAM
BAM
SPANG
Come on, bubbie!
THWAP
SPOK
Don't--
What does it take for you to go night-night?
Oh man!

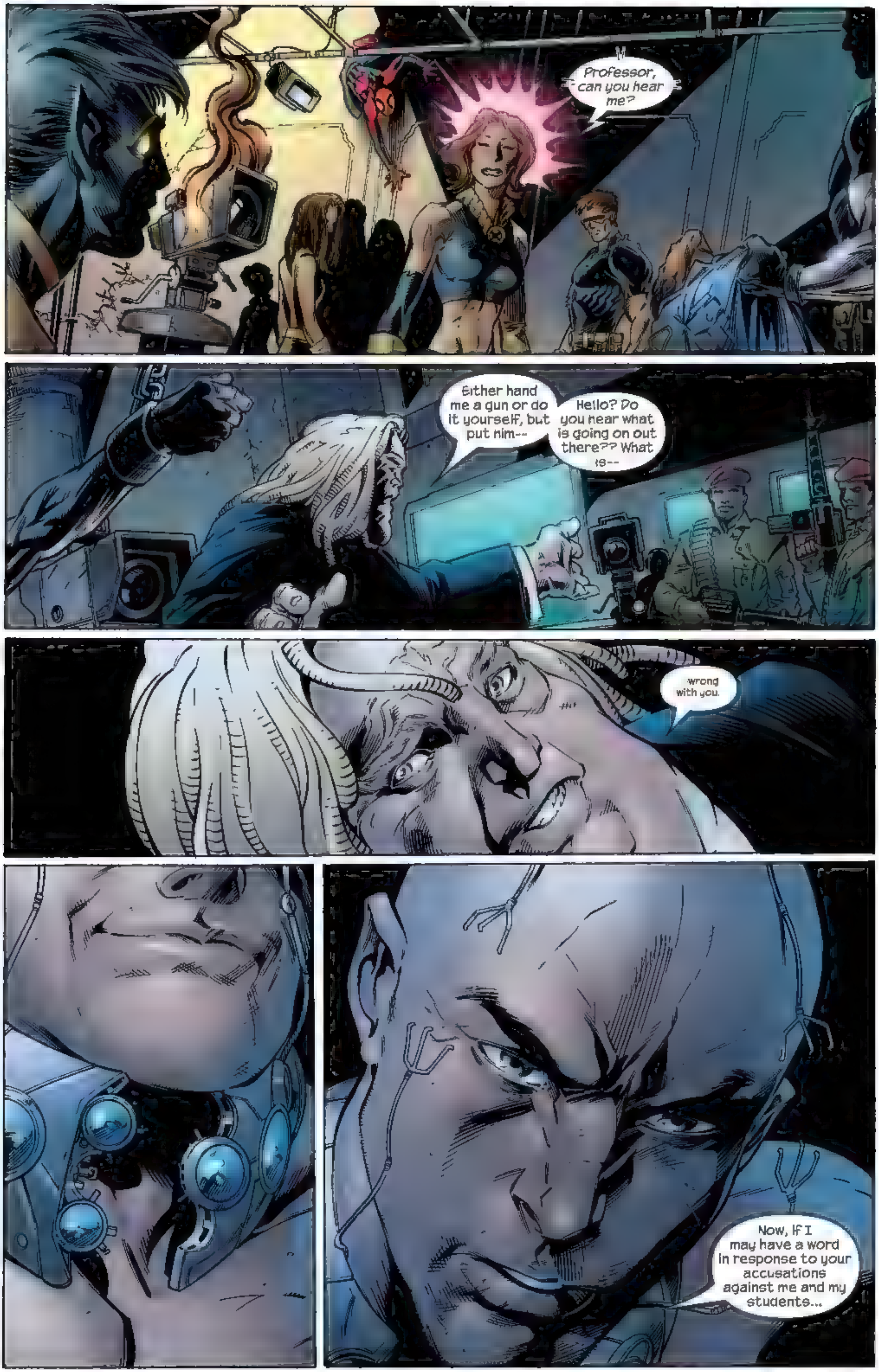

EZER
UH-OH.
I told you!
You don't have what it takes to win against this!
I will win this!
We gave up everything to destroy you animals!
We gave up everything to put you down!

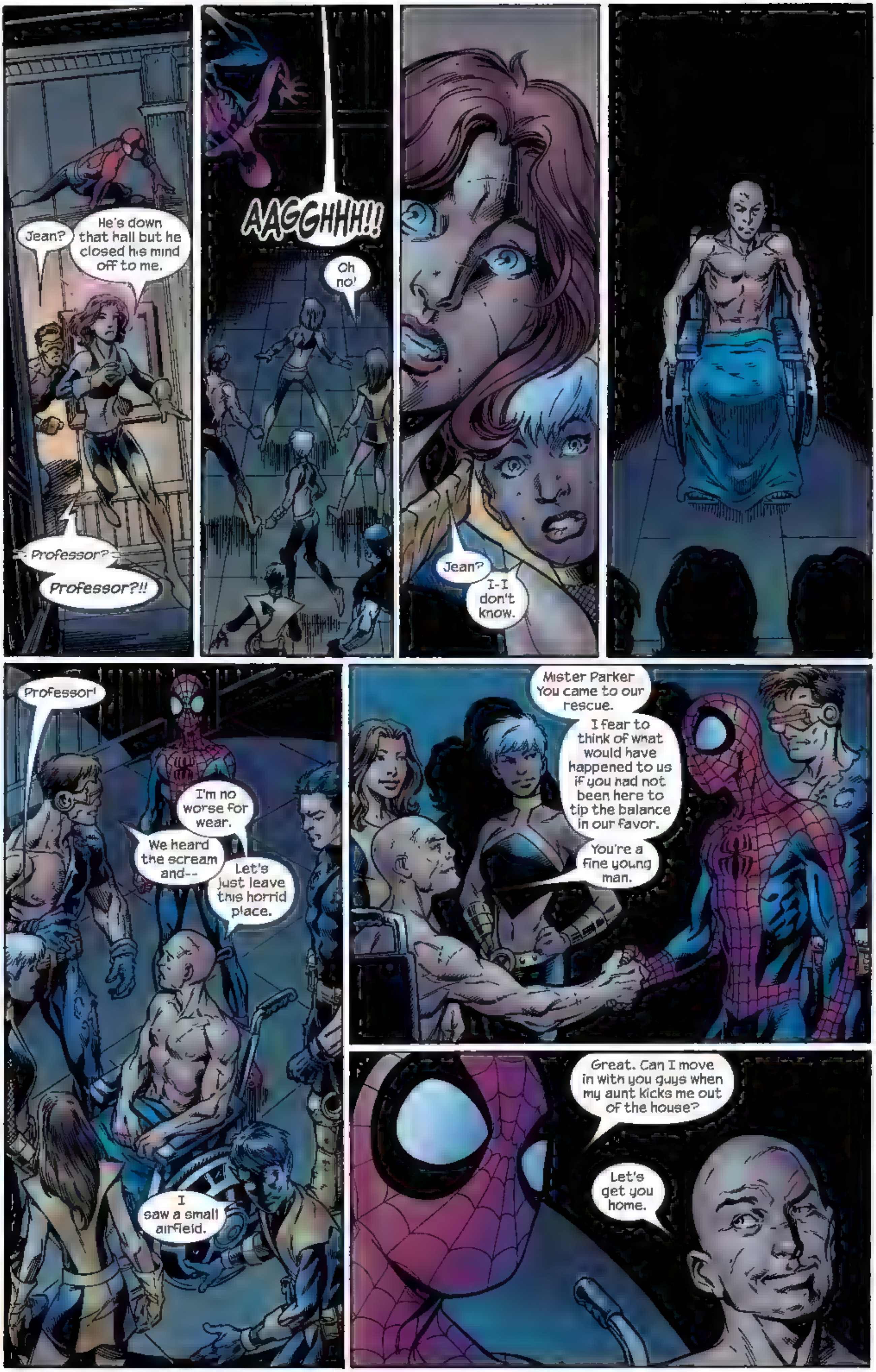

I'M SORRY YOU AT HOME HAD TO SEE THAT. WE--
"AS WE EXPLAINED EARLIER IN THE SHOW, THE REAVERS WENT THROUGH GRUELING SURGICAL EXPERIMENTS TO MAKE THEMSELVES EQUAL TO THE TASK OF FIGHTING SUPER-POWERED MUTANT YOUTH.
"AS YOU CAN SEE, WADEY WILSON TOOK IT AS FAR AS A MAN CAN."
Peter, throw me at him.
What?
Do you understand?
Do you?
I understand you smell like a KFC dumpster on a hot day.
They'll understand when it's over.
Nn...

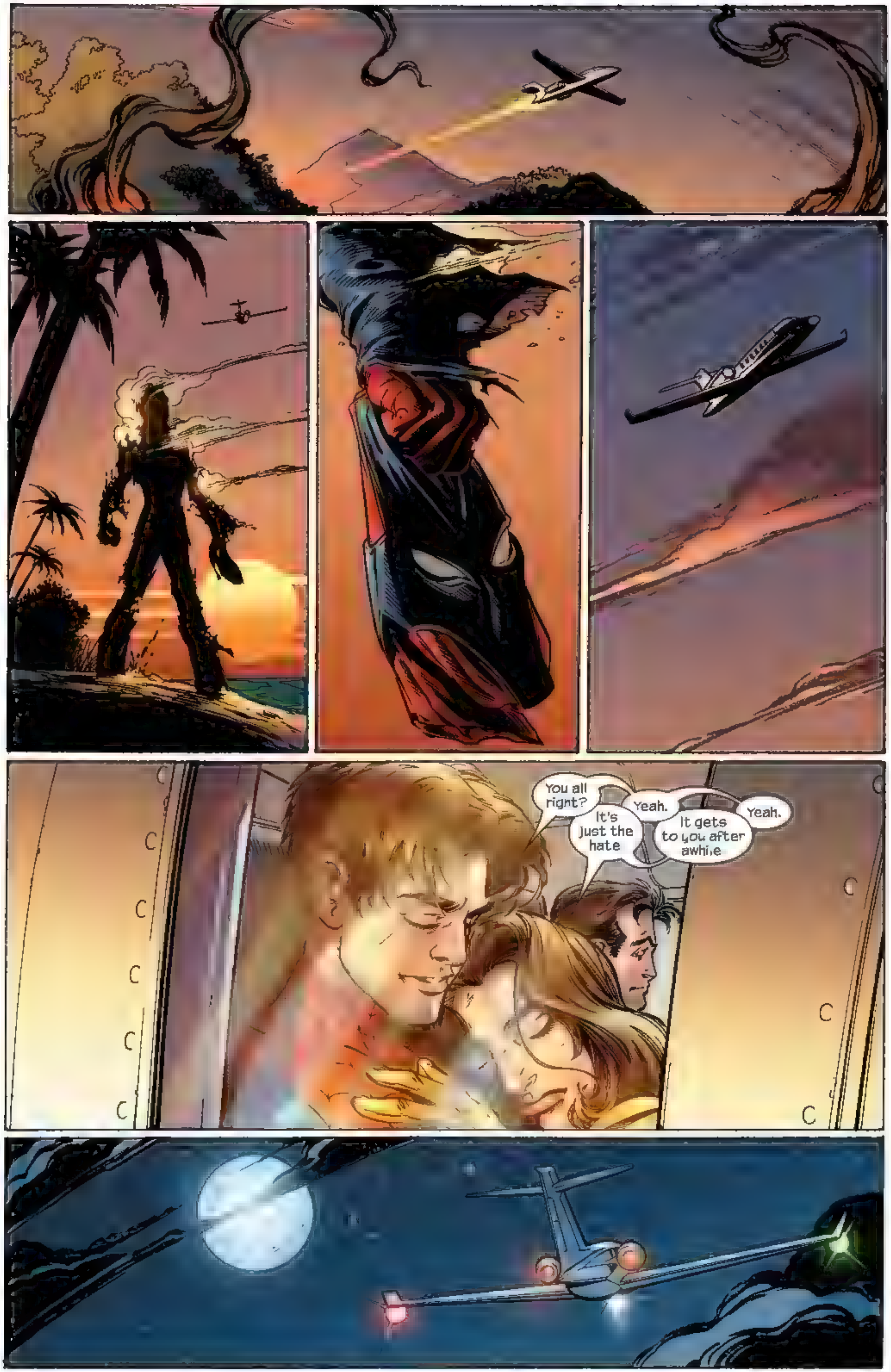

YOUNGER VIEWERS MAY WANT TO TURN AWAY--
YYYAARGGH!
I will not go-rrgg!
Kitty!

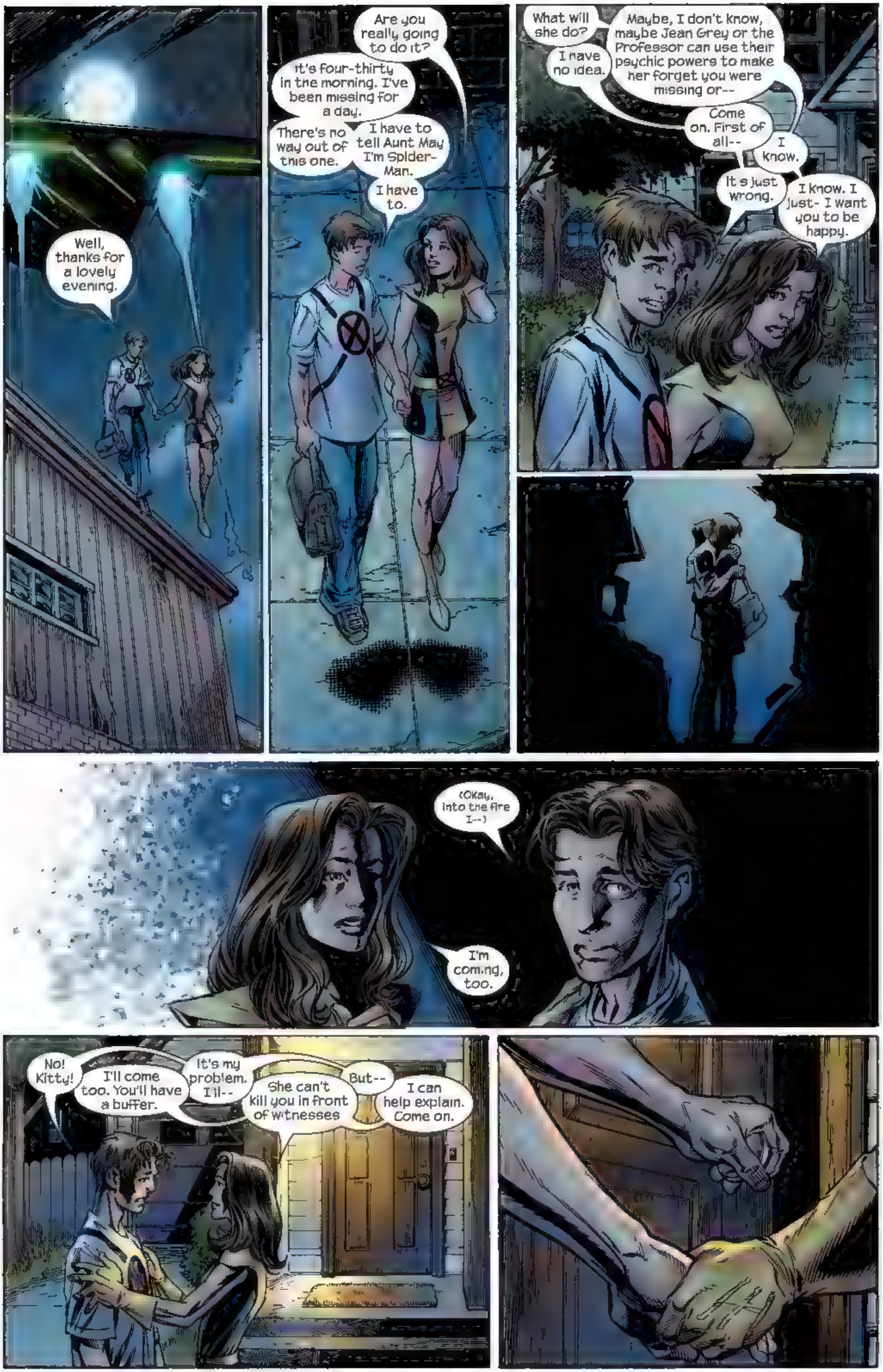

UM...
Let's do it for Wadey!
FOOM
TUS BEEZY LIVE
OKAY, UH, MAYBE WE SHOULD JUST...

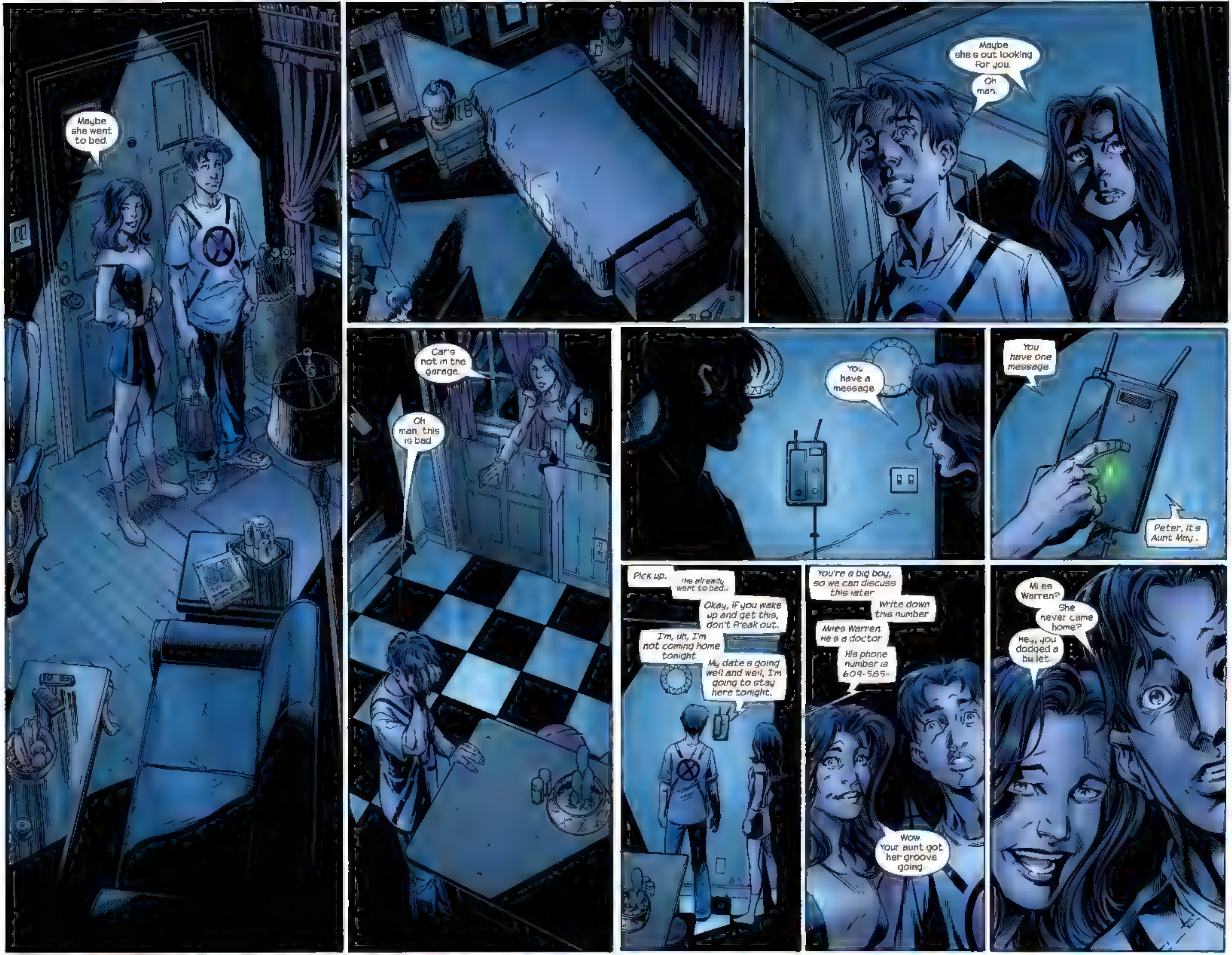

KOA ISLAND, LIVE
IF YOU CAN HEAR US?
THE AUTHORITIES!! THIS IS LIVE!
WE ARE UNDER SIEGE BY MUTANT—
KRAKOA ND, LIVE
YES, THE AUTHORITIES.
PLEASE, IF YOU ARE WATCHING THIS.
KRAKOA ISLAND
PLEASE DO COME AND TAKE CARE OF THIS TELEVISION SHOW THAT KIDNAPS CHILDREN OUT OF THEIR BEDS AND BRINGS THEM HERE TO TORTURE AND KILL THEM.
KRAKOA ISLAN
MY NAME IS JEAN GREY.
AND I DON'T HAVE TO ASK YOU WHERE YOU ARE KEEPING PROFESSOR XAVIER.
I CAN JUST LOOK INTO YOUR MIND AND TAKE IT.
I COULD ALSO TELL YOUR MIND TO STOP BREATHING.
BUT I'M ONE OF THE GOOD GUYS.
LUCKY YOU.
ISLAND, LIV
HEY, KIDS!
IF YOU'RE WATCHING THIS AT HOME, WATCHING THIS TELEVISED HATE CRIME.
YOU'RE THE REASON YOUR LIFE SUCKS, NOT US.
KRAKO ISLAND
SIT IN THE DARK AND THINK ABOUT THAT.


Professor, can you hear me?
Either hand me a gun or do it yourself, but put him--
Hello? Do you hear what is going on out there?? What is--
wrong with you.
Now, if I may have a word in response to your accusations against me and my students...


Jean?
He's down that hall but he closed his mind off to me.
Professor?
Professor?!!
AAGGHHH!!
Oh no!
Jean?
I-I don't know.
Professor!
I'm no worse for wear.
We heard the scream and--
Let's just leave this horrid place.
I saw a small airfield.
Mister Parker. You came to our rescue.
I fear to think of what would have happened to us if you had not been here to tip the balance in our favor.
You're a fine young man.
Great. Can I move in with you guys when my aunt kicks me out of the house?
Let's get you home.


You all right?
It's just the hate
Yeah.
It gets to you after awhile
Yeah.


Well, thanks for a lovely evening.
Are you really going to do it?
It's four-thirty in the morning. I've been missing for a day.
There's no way out of this one.
I have to tell Aunt May I'm Spider-Man.
I have to.
What will she do?
I have no idea.
Maybe, I don't know, maybe Jean Grey or the Professor can use their psychic powers to make her forget you were missing or--
Come on. First of all--
I know.
It's just wrong.
I know. I just- I want you to be happy.
(Okay, into the fire I--)
I'm coming, too.
No! Kitty!
I'll come too. You'll have a buffer.
It's my problem. I'll--
She can't kill you in front of witnesses
But--
I can help explain. Come on.


Maybe she went to bed.
Maybe she's out looking for you.
Oh man.
Car's not in the garage.
Oh man, this is bad
You have a message.
You have one message.
Peter, it's Aunt May.
Pick up.
He already went to bed..
Okay, if you wake up and get this, don't freak out.
I'm, uh, I'm not coming home tonight
My date's going well and well, I'm going to stay here tonight.
You're a big boy, so we can discuss this later
Write down this number
Miles Warren. He's a doctor
His phone number is 609-585-
Wow. Your aunt got her groove going
Miles Warren?
She never came home?
Hey, you dodged a bullet.

ULTIMATE SPIDER-MAN

Associate Editor John Barber here, to apologize for the lack of a letters page in the last couple issues, and to thank everybody that's stepped in to help keep us on schedule these last couple issues! Hope you enjoyed the guest inking of Danny Miki last issue, and thanks to Mark McKenna and Mark Morales for doing a few pages here and there, too! Also, of course, thanks to Laura Martin and our regular cover painter Richard Isanove for lending a hand in the coloring department!

Hey,

I know I'm a little late for a couple of these issues, but I'm in college and I can't really get my hands on comic books out in the middle of New York state on a regular basis. Anyway, I wanted to say that I think you've been doing a great job with *Ultimate Spider-Man*. Actually, it's only recently that I started collecting comics, but I spent all my savings just to collect the entire series (my brother and parents thought I was deluded, but hey, everyone has their problems...now if only that squirrel would stop talking to me).

Anyway, I just wanted to say a couple of things.

1. I like how it was the Ultimate Wrecking Crew that was the team that cleaned up the docks in the beginning of the "Silver Sable" arc. Clearly, they aren't bad guys...yet.

2. The energy form of vibranium that the Tinkerer was referring to, would that be the same vibranium that Roxxon was messing with in the 1991 Spider-Man annuals (from the time of the beginning of Bagley's run on *Amazing Spider-Man*), would it?

3. I really enjoy how I don't have to pick up like three different tittles to follow *USM*. It really makes things much more convenient and pleasant.

4. How come there are only 5-6 issue story arcs? I'm not complaining really, 'cause I think they're great, but a longer one wouldn't hurt.

Okay, that's all for now—keep up the great work (wow, I can't believe I wrote all that).

Sincerely,
Ausuran Stein and Henry Yung

Thanks for writing! To answer in order: 1) Well, yeah...we'll have to keep an eye on these guys, I suppose... 2) Good memory—but, ah, no, not really. 3) So do we! But, you know, if you really *feel* like buying other comics, we could probably set you up with something in an *Ultimate X-Men* that you might like... 4) It's really up to Brian and Mark—we like to keep the series available in paperbacks, and 5-6 issues is a nice size for those, but if Brian ever wanted to go bigger than that (and a couple stories have)...we'd find a way to make it work!

Dear *Ultimate Spider-Man*:

I am glad that Ultimate Spider-Man has that wit and sarcasm—he's still the Spider-Man I remember from the Silver Age. I enjoyed Spider-Man's remarks while he is tied down in the streets by Ringer. Ringer himself is a comedian of sorts, and doesn't know it, as he brags that he is from Waldorf, Maryland and then Spider-Man snaps back..."I must have missed the memo, when was Maryland considered cool?" I busted up laughing... but...why does he say he was from Maryland, when his ID clearly shows he is from Medina County, Ohio?

How funny in the Ultimate Universe, Spider-Man is considered a mutant...but in reality he is. When the radioactive spider bit him, it altered his genes—his genes mutated—henceforth he became a mutant in his own right.

USM #91 was a tremendously good read—but someone needs to tell Aunt May that she is too old for miniskirts...for criminy sakes!

Sincerely yours,
Paul Dale Roberts

Aunt May might not be a teenager like Peter and Kitty, but she's certainly not ready to hang up her miniskirts! And Spidey himself wondered why Ringer was not only *bragging* about being from Waldorf, Maryland—but *lying* about it! As for Peter being a mutant—in scientific terms, mutations happen constantly (*especially* when you're bit by genetically-altered spiders). But the term "mutant" in the Ultimate Universe is usually applied to people with the so-called "x-gene," which Spidey doesn't have...but which the general public doesn't *know* Spidey doesn't have...so sometimes people get confused.

Hey there, you folks at *USM*,

I gotta tell ya, even though we only really get to see 'em in one panel, I am diggin' Deadpool and the Reavers. I'm lookin' forward to seein' what kinda chaos they bring about next issue. So far, I have yet to be let down by any Ultimate title—so kudos to all of you for keeping up the top-notch work, month after month. Really, the Ultimate line is some of the best stuff coming out of the House of Ideas. Be careful, though. A certain star spangled Avenger and a certain Man Without Fear from the not-so-Ultimate universe are close to usurping you as the books I save to read last (the highest honor I bestow to a comic).

I digress. I'm writing because I have a few comments and questions I'd like to address. First, it's obvious that Deadpool can either shape-shift or disguise himself with holograms or some such ability. My question is, if he was mimicking Storm when Kitty arrived home, then who was Wolverine?

Secondly, is there supposed to be some sort of theme with Kitty's "Spider-Girl" costume? I mean, what's up with the little wing-like design around her eyes?

Also, I was just wondering, since I'm pretty sure lettering nowadays is all done with computers, why didn't you have Cory Petit do the lettering for the computers in the X-Men's communication center.

While I'm on the subject of the creative team, I gotta give praise to some of the unsung heroes on the creative team. I know Bendis and Bagley get all the glory, but Cory and Justin Ponsor are doing great work. I know most people may not think much of lettering but when the Ringer goes FABOOM and Spidey gets ZACCKLEED, the lettering makes a huge impact, whether the reader realizes it or not. Same goes with the coloring. The detail in the sidewalks, the marble floor and even the headlights of Aunt May's car are all incredibly subtle but it all makes an impact on a subconscious level to draw the reader into Spidey's world. You guys at the *USM* head office be sure to give Cory and Justin a big pat on the back, okay?

Later gators,
Andrew Galgoci

As you've probably put together by now, the whole team of Reavers seems to have been equipped with image-inducers back at the X-Mansion. As for Kitty's costume: well...It looks like that Kitty's ambitions in costuming outstrip her aesthetic sensibilities sometimes...And those computer screens—Mark drew all the text on the page, John inked it, and Justin colored it so nicely, we all thought it fit in with the art really well and decided to keep it! You're right, though—Cory and Justin do a pretty amazing job on lettering and coloring! Also—you wouldn't find bigger fans of *Captain America* and *Daredevil* than this office—and we're happy to plug 'em here!

Bendis, Bagley, Macchio & crew:

I'm a huge Marvel fanatic from waaay back & I'm loving *USM*. I was recently reading some old *Creatures On The Loose* back issues and I noticed in issue #35 (1975!) a letter from Ralph Macchio of New Jersey! Wow. How cool is that? From letter writing in 1975 to Ultimate Editor today!

Anyway, even though the Ultimate version of John Jameson was revealed to have died on a space shuttle (in *USM* #49, I think) is there any chance we can one day see an "Ultimate Man-Wolf" appear? I would love to see it as would tons of other Marvel Monster fans.

WebHobbit

PS: Can't wait for #100!

It's great to get a Ralph Macchio anecdote without a *Karate Kid* joke. Our Ralph's definitely that letter-writer! As for Man-Wolf...who knows what the future holds?

Dear *USM* team,

I was really surprised to read all the letters from people who didn't much like you killing off Gwen Stacy. I personally thought it was handled fantastically. In the original universe Gwen Stacy's death was a huge part of Spidey's evolution as a hero, and to completely ignore that piece of his life in the Ultimate universe would be a mistake.

So yeah, there's my two cents, and until Aunt May becomes Venom, make mine Marvel!

Paris Kelvakis

Thanks, Paris!

Dear *USM* Team,

Phenomenal work, everyone! I love your recreation of characters, most notably Ultimate Venom. I love how he (Eddie) and his problems are as relatable as Peter's. I feel for the villains (well, most of them) in these storylines, and I think it's important to do so.

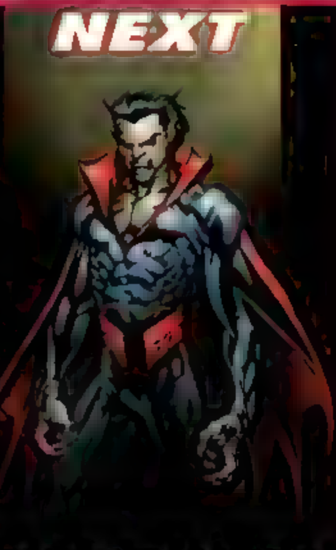
I also want to say I love where you're going with the stories and progression of characters. You got probably six different plot twists going on right now and others I'm sure I (and thousands of fans everywhere) haven't realized are there yet.

I like Ultimate Nick Fury, and I just finished reading issue #90 and I'm deeply concerned for where this is going. But on the other hand, I enjoy seeing Spider-Man standing up for what he believes in...such as in the final moments of the "Hobgoblin" series.

My final statement is that, if the rumors of Ultimate Morbius are true, you must please bring in Ultimate Blade. I think I would buy that issue for all of my friends. Keep it fun, guys! You're all doing a great job! You too, Mr. Dell!

Have fun!
Ty

Why that sounds like my cue to step out and tell you what's up...



Morbius! Blade! Spider-Man! And who'd guess–but they don't all get along! You'll never forgive yourself if you miss "Morbius" part 1!

NICOLE BOOSE
ASSISTANT EDITOR

JOHN BARBER
ASSOCIATE EDITOR

RALPH MACCHIO
EDITOR

JOE QUESADA
CHIEF

ULTIMATE SPIDER-MAN
c/o MARVEL COMICS
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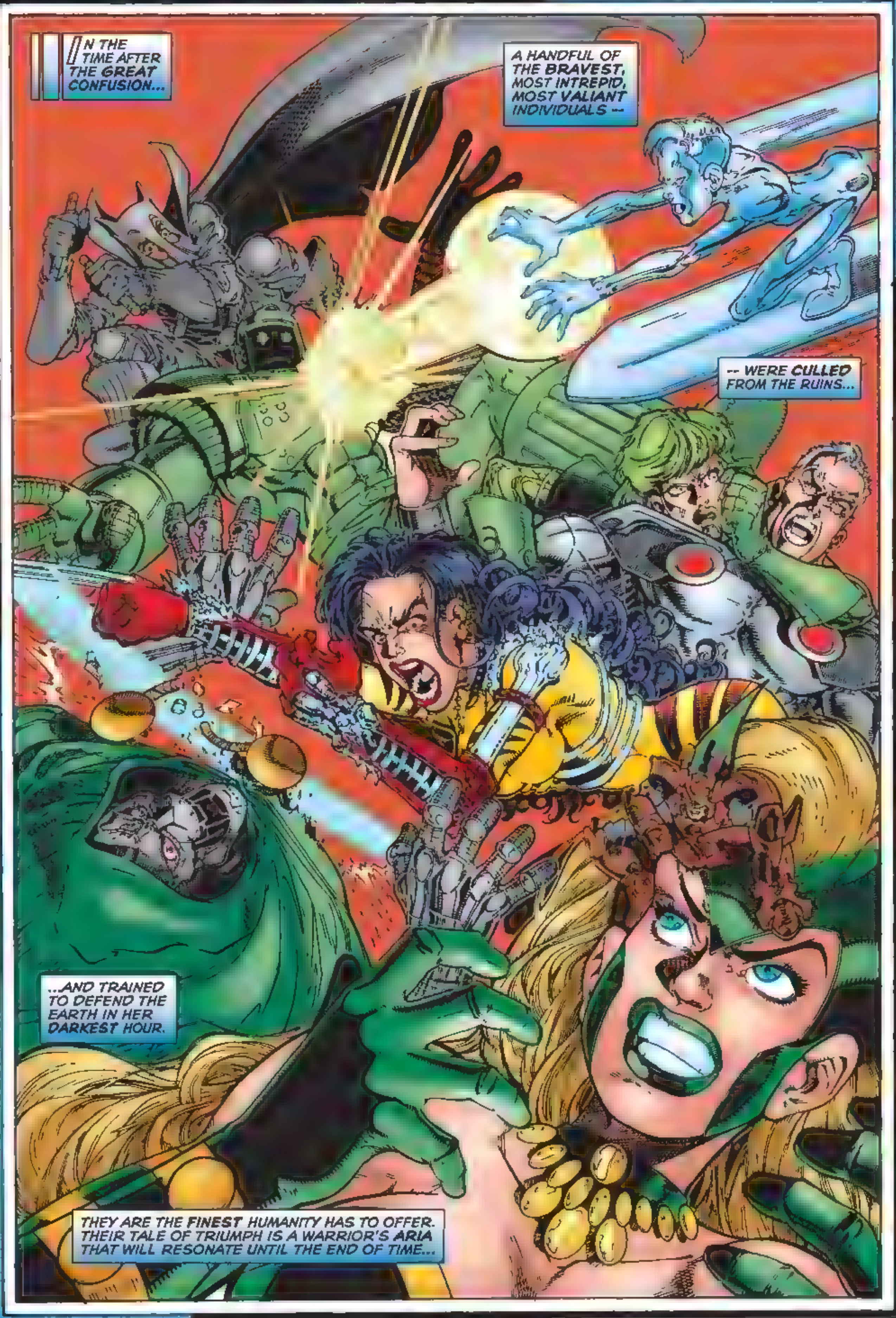
MARK LETTERS AND E-MAIL
"OKAY TO PRINT"

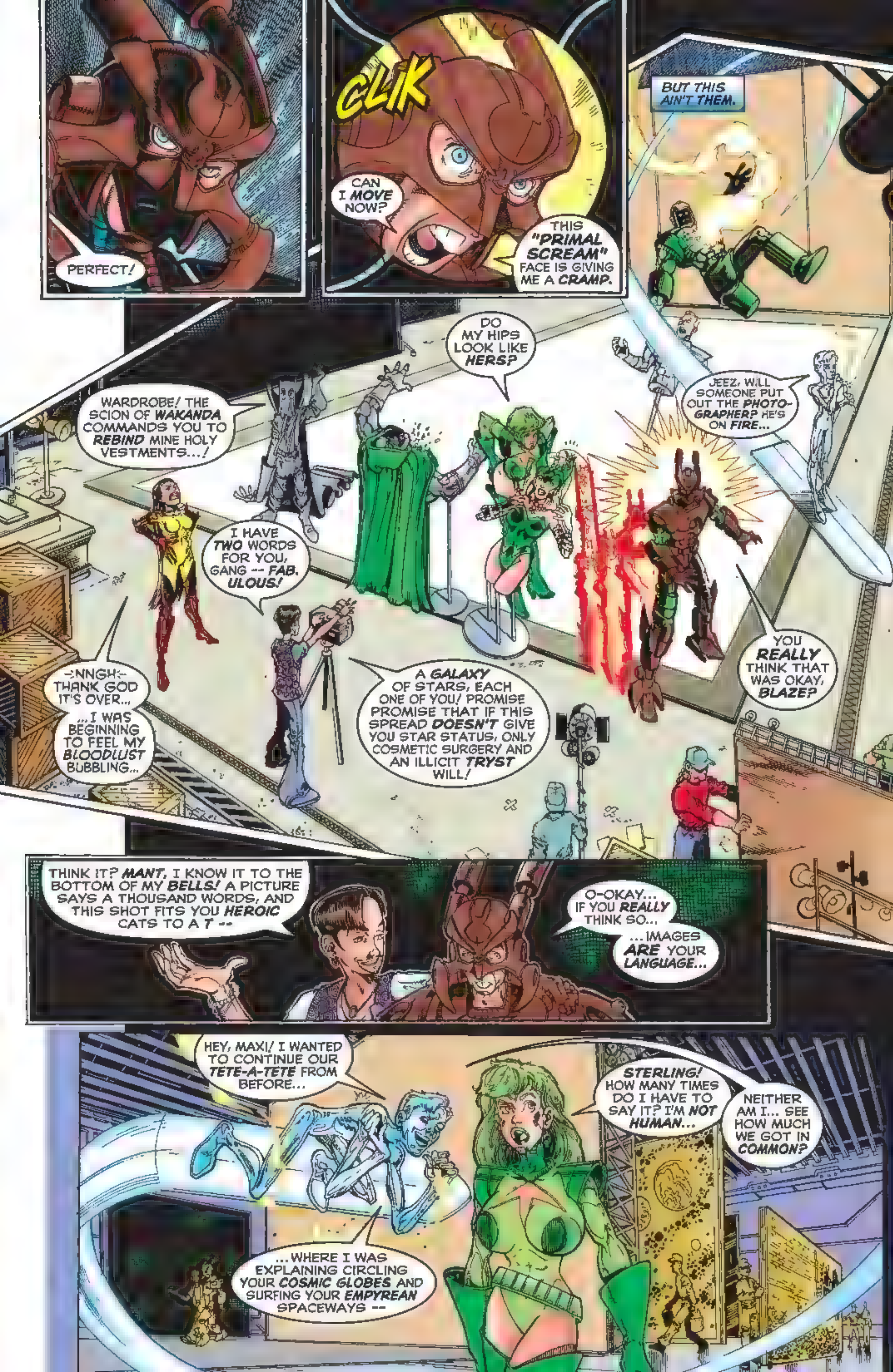
MARVEL COMICS

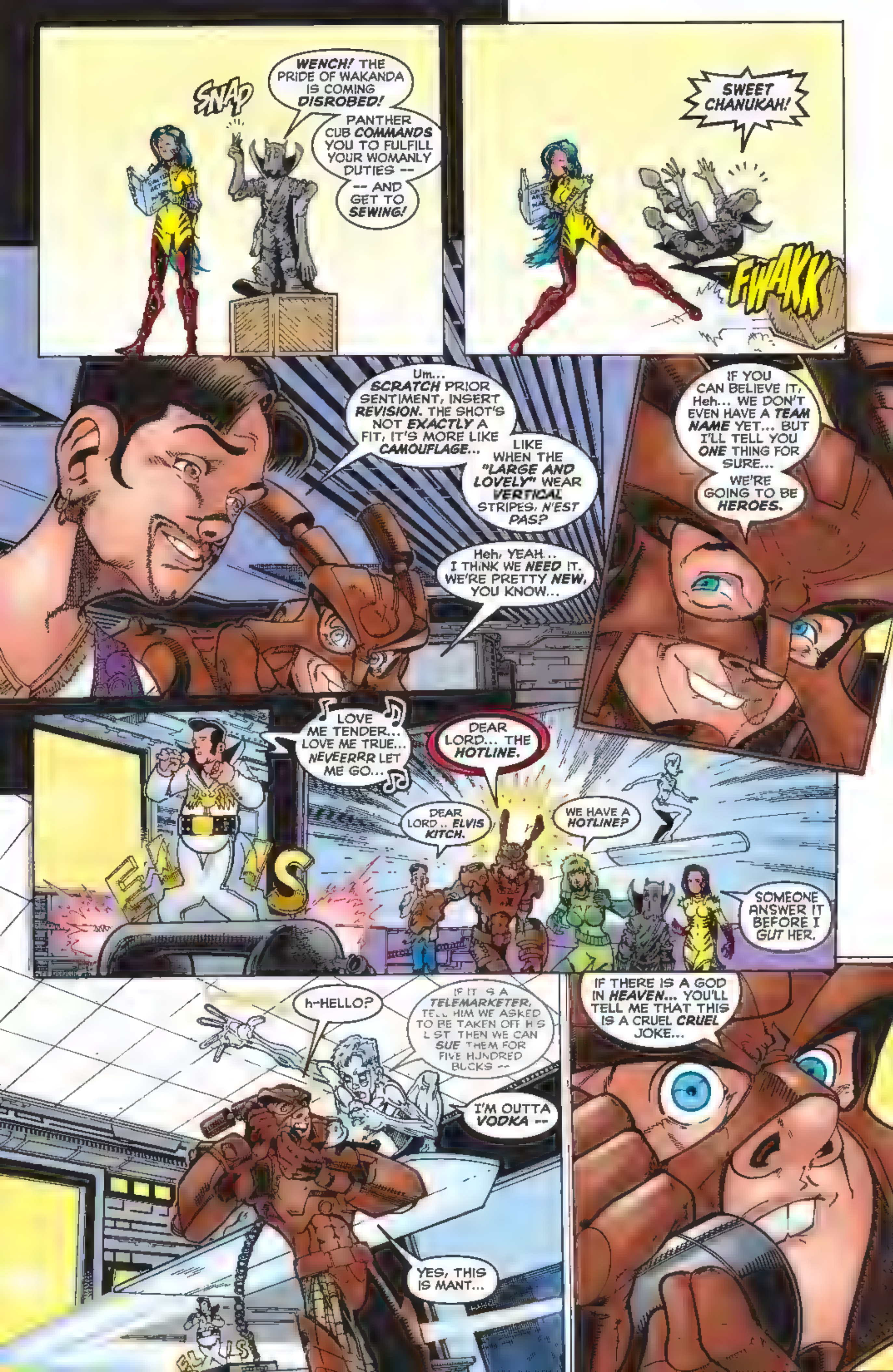
HEROES REBORN
REMNANTS

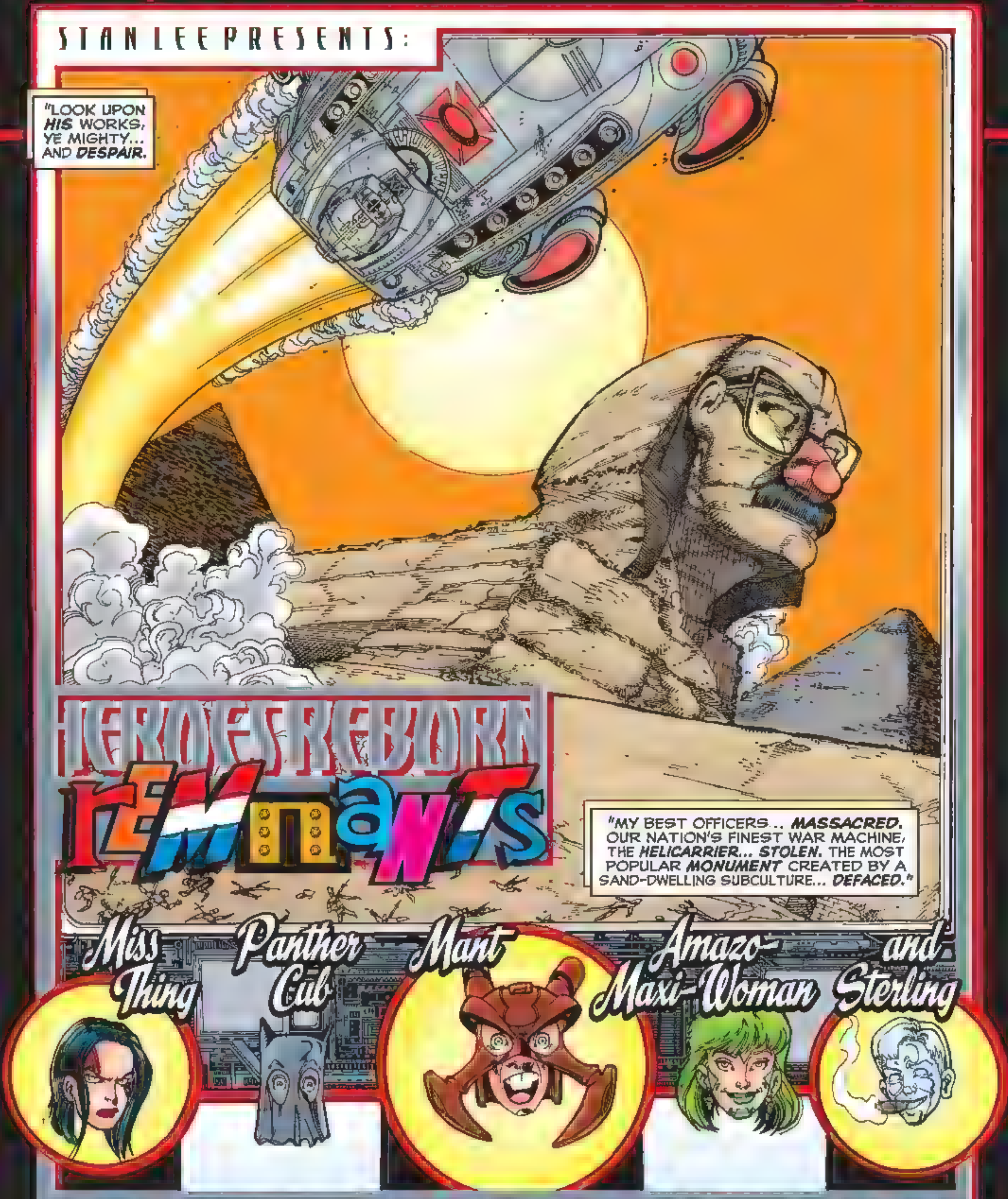
NO 1

KELLY · VAN SCIVER


IN THE TIME AFTER THE GREAT CONFUSION...
A HANDFUL OF THE BRAVEST, MOST INTREPID, MOST VALIANT INDIVIDUALS --
-- WERE CULLED FROM THE RUINS...
...AND TRAINED TO DEFEND THE EARTH IN HER DARKEST HOUR.
THEY ARE THE FINEST HUMANITY HAS TO OFFER. THEIR TALE OF TRIUMPH IS A WARRIOR'S ARIA THAT WILL RESONATE UNTIL THE END OF TIME...


PERFECT!
CLIK
CAN I MOVE NOW?
THIS "PRIMAL SCREAM" FACE IS GIVING ME A CRAMP.
BUT THIS AIN'T THEM.
WARDROBE! THE SCION OF WAKANDA COMMANDS YOU TO REBIND MINE HOLY VESTMENTS...!
DO MY HIPS LOOK LIKE HERS?
JEEZ, WILL SOMEONE PUT OUT THE PHOTOGRAPHER? HE'S ON FIRE...
I HAVE TWO WORDS FOR YOU, GANG -- FAB. ULOUS!
-NNGH- THANK GOD IT'S OVER...
...I WAS BEGINNING TO FEEL MY BLOODLUST BUBBLING...
A GALAXY OF STARS, EACH ONE OF YOU! PROMISE PROMISE THAT IF THIS SPREAD DOESN'T GIVE YOU STAR STATUS, ONLY COSMETIC SURGERY AND AN ILLICIT TRYST WILL!
YOU REALLY THINK THAT WAS OKAY, BLAZE?
THINK IT? MANT, I KNOW IT TO THE BOTTOM OF MY BELLS! A PICTURE SAYS A THOUSAND WORDS, AND THIS SHOT FITS YOU HEROIC CATS TO A T --
O-OKAY... IF YOU REALLY THINK SO...
...IMAGES ARE YOUR LANGUAGE...
HEY, MAXI! I WANTED TO CONTINUE OUR TETE-A-TETE FROM BEFORE...
...WHERE I WAS EXPLAINING CIRCLING YOUR COSMIC GLOBES AND SURFING YOUR EMPYREAN SPACEWAYS --
STERLING! HOW MANY TIMES DO I HAVE TO SAY IT? I'M NOT HUMAN...
NEITHER AM I... SEE HOW MUCH WE GOT IN COMMON?


SNAP
WENCH! THE PRIDE OF WAKANDA IS COMING DISROBED!
PANTHER CUB COMMANDS YOU TO FULFILL YOUR WOMANLY DUTIES --
-- AND GET TO SEWING!
SWEET CHANUKAH!
FWAKK
Um... SCRATCH PRIOR SENTIMENT, INSERT REVISION. THE SHOT'S NOT EXACTLY A FIT, IT'S MORE LIKE CAMOUFLAGE...
LIKE WHEN THE "LARGE AND LOVELY" WEAR VERTICAL STRIPES, N'EST PAS?
Heh, YEAH... I THINK WE NEED IT. WE'RE PRETTY NEW, YOU KNOW...
IF YOU CAN BELIEVE IT, Heh... WE DON'T EVEN HAVE A TEAM NAME YET... BUT I'LL TELL YOU ONE THING FOR SURE...
WE'RE GOING TO BE HEROES.
LOVE ME TENDER... LOVE ME TRUE... NEVEERRR LET ME GO...
DEAR LORD... THE HOTLINE.
DEAR LORD.. ELVIS KITCH.
WE HAVE A HOTLINE?
SOMEONE ANSWER IT BEFORE I GUT HER.
h-HELLO?
IF IT IS A TELEMARKETER, TELL HIM WE ASKED TO BE TAKEN OFF HIS LIST THEN WE CAN SUE THEM FOR FIVE HUNDRED BUCKS --
I'M OUTTA VODKA --
YES, THIS IS MANT...
IF THERE IS A GOD IN HEAVEN... YOU'LL TELL ME THAT THIS IS A CRUEL CRUEL JOKE...


STAN LEE PRESENTS:
"LOOK UPON *HIS* WORKS, YE MIGHTY... AND *DESPAIR.*
HEROES REBORN
REMNANTS
"MY BEST OFFICERS... *MASSACRED.* OUR NATION'S FINEST WAR MACHINE, THE *HELICARRIER... STOLEN.* THE MOST POPULAR *MONUMENT* CREATED BY A SAND-DWELLING SUBCULTURE... *DEFACED.*"
Miss Thing
Panther Cub
Mant
Amazo-Maxi-Woman
and Sterling

THE DAY THE EARTH GOT ILL!

BY JOE KELLY AND ETHAN VAN SCIVER
LABAT, KOBLISH, RAMOS, HANNA, SCUMMY, CZOP, NELSON SCIVER BAIL-OUT BRIGADE
REMNANTS CREATED, WITH APOLOGIES, BY JOE KELLY AND ETHAN VAN SCIVER
TOM SMITH COLORS RICHARD STARKINGS AND COMICRAFT LETTERS TOM BREVOORT EDITOR BOB HARRAS CHIEF

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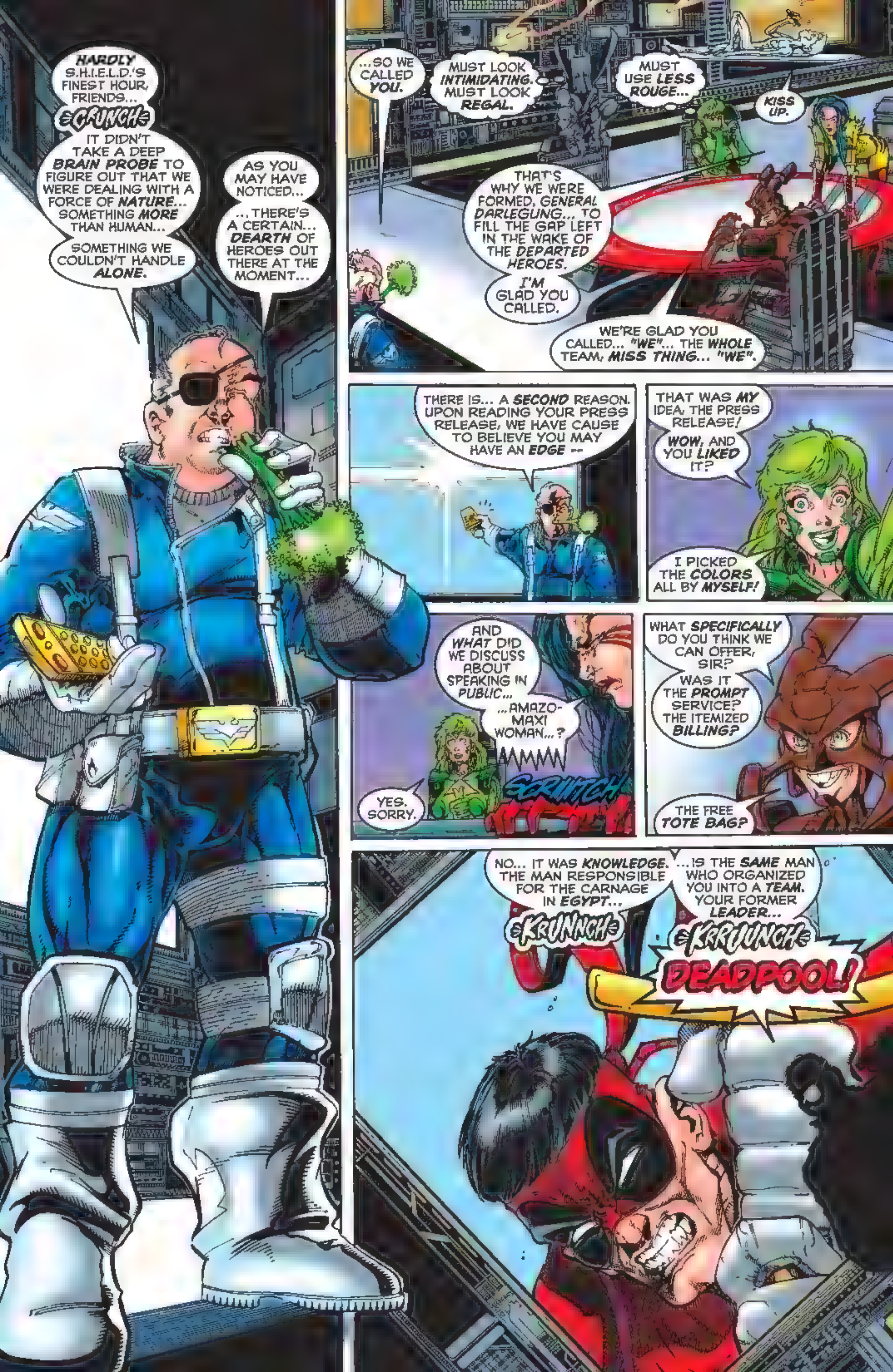
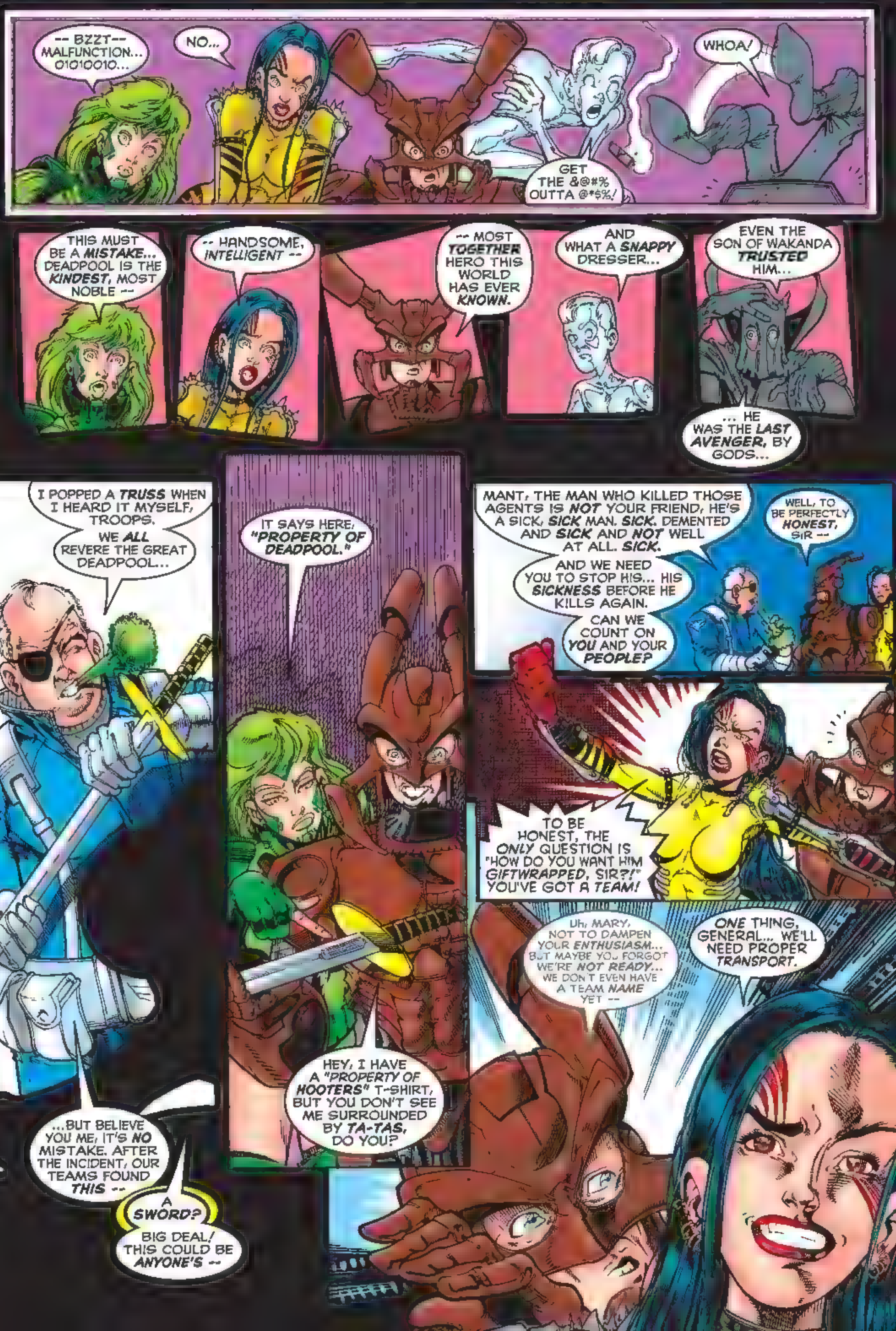
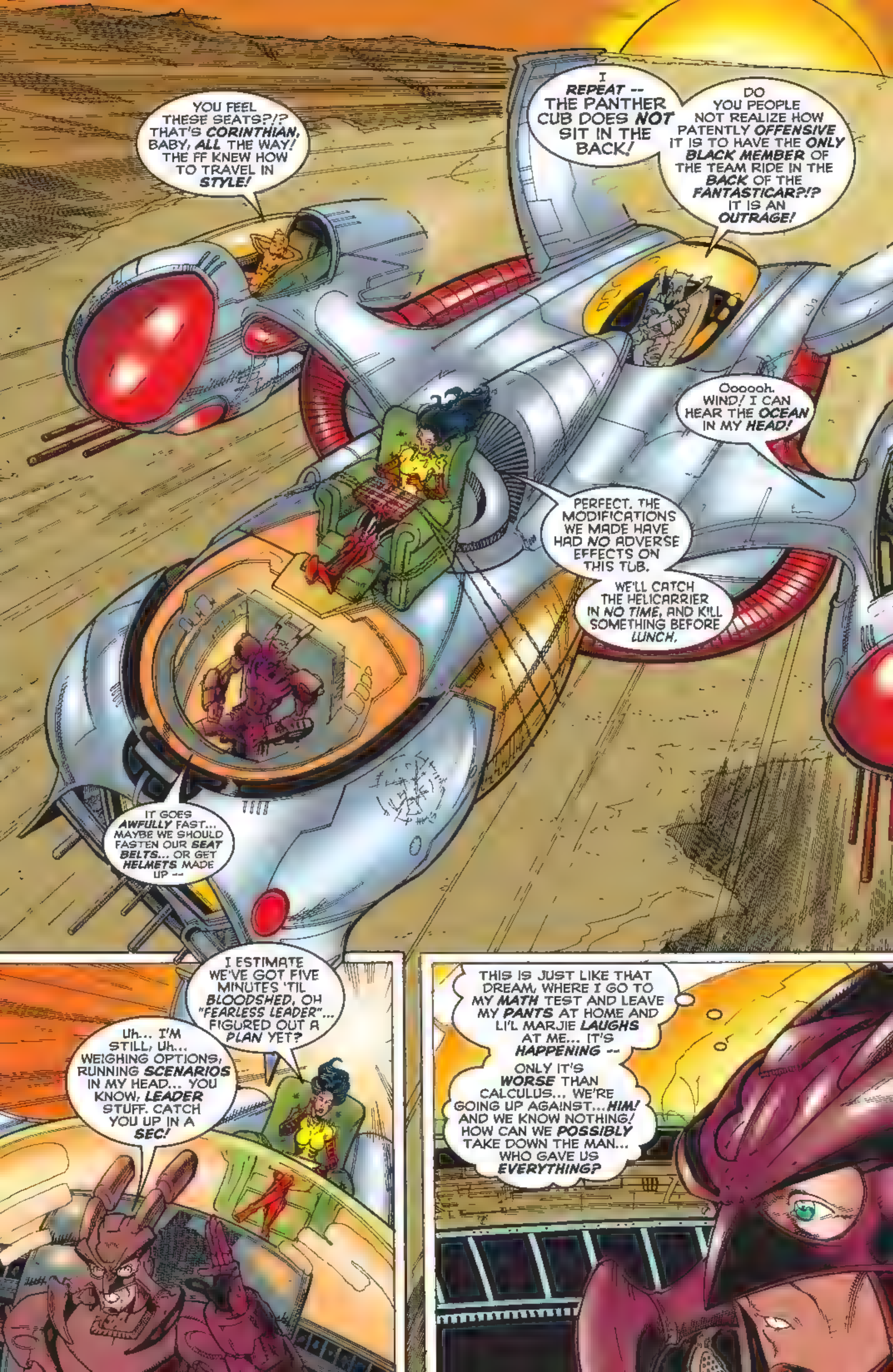
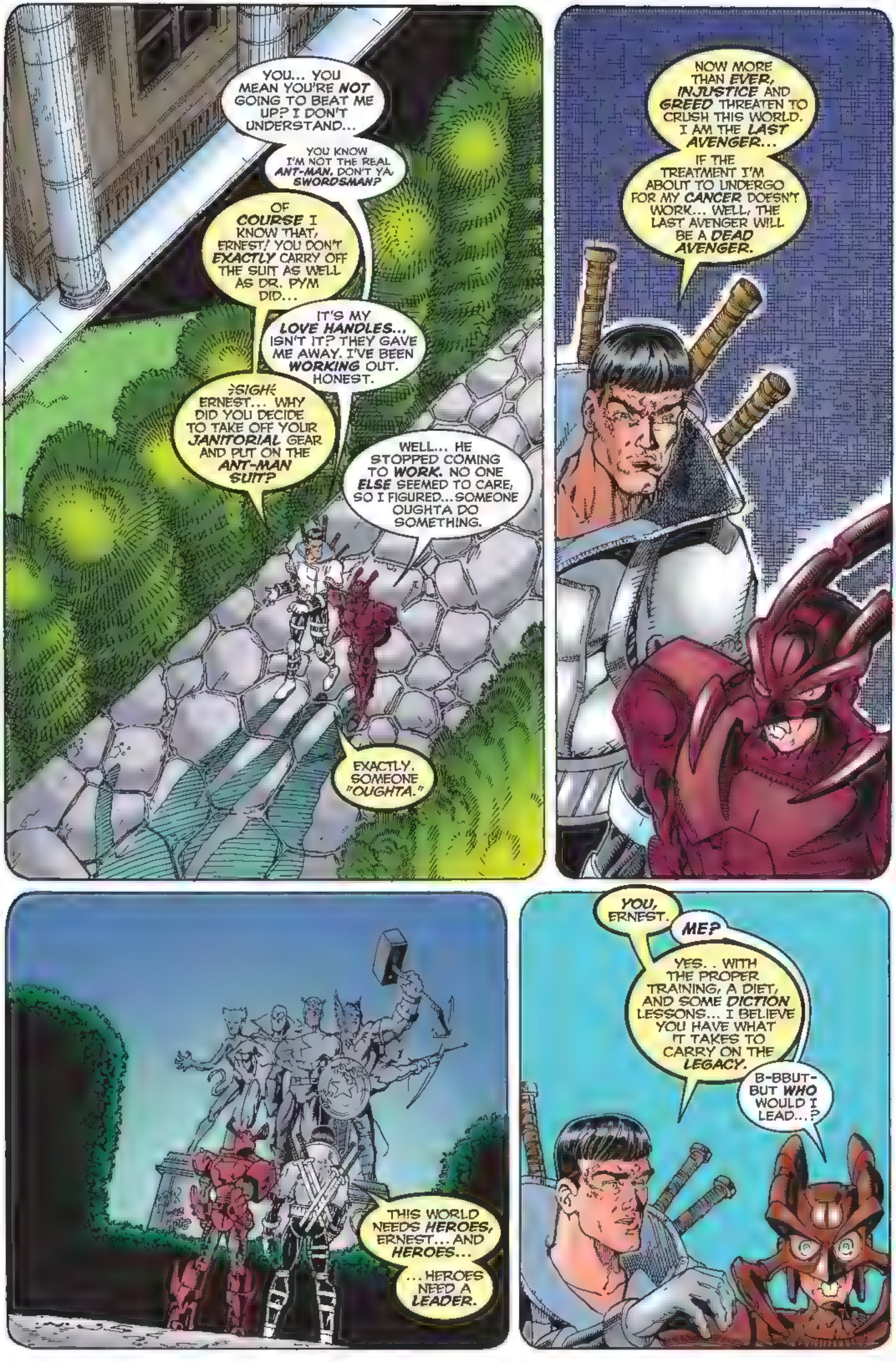
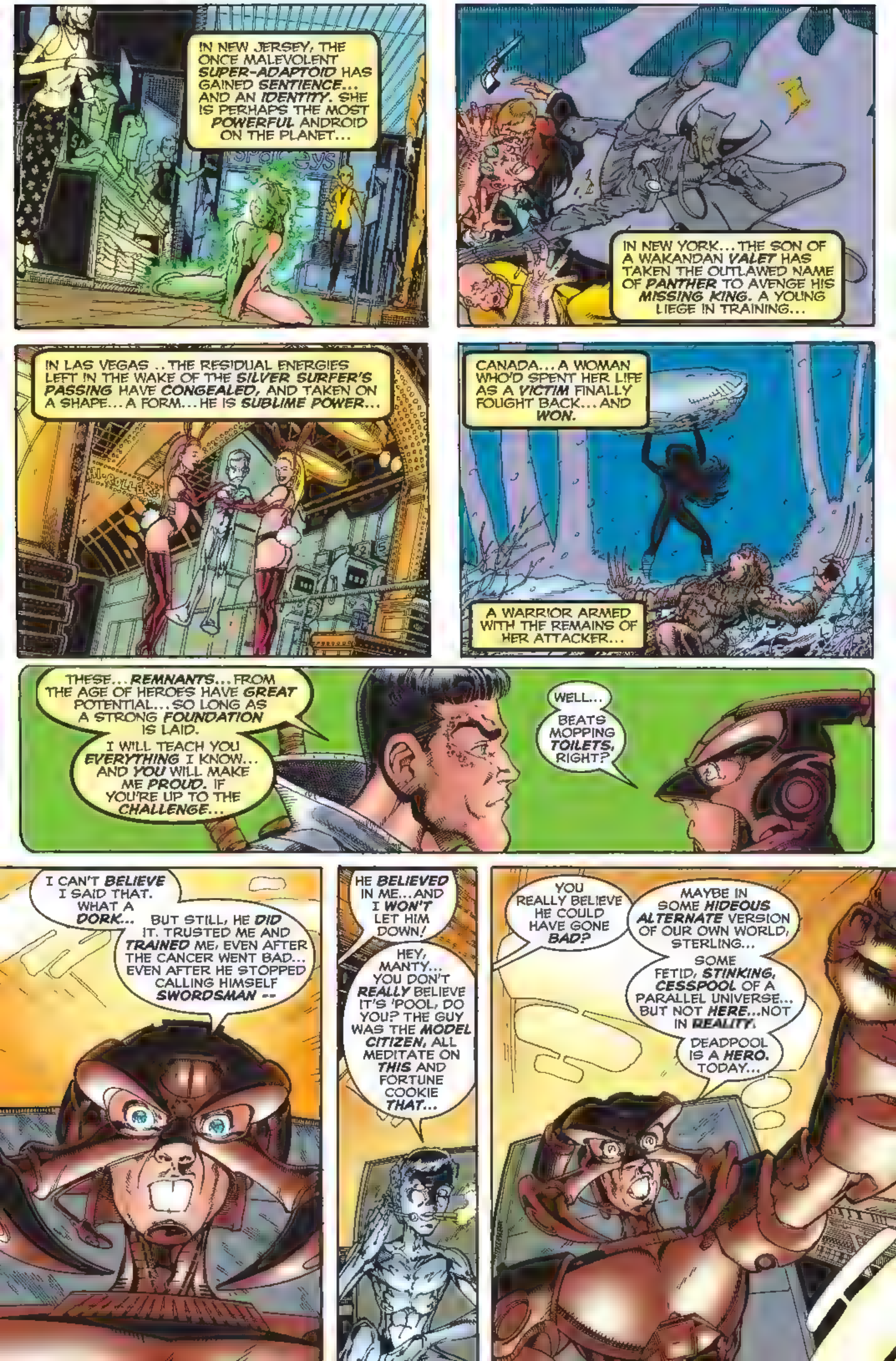
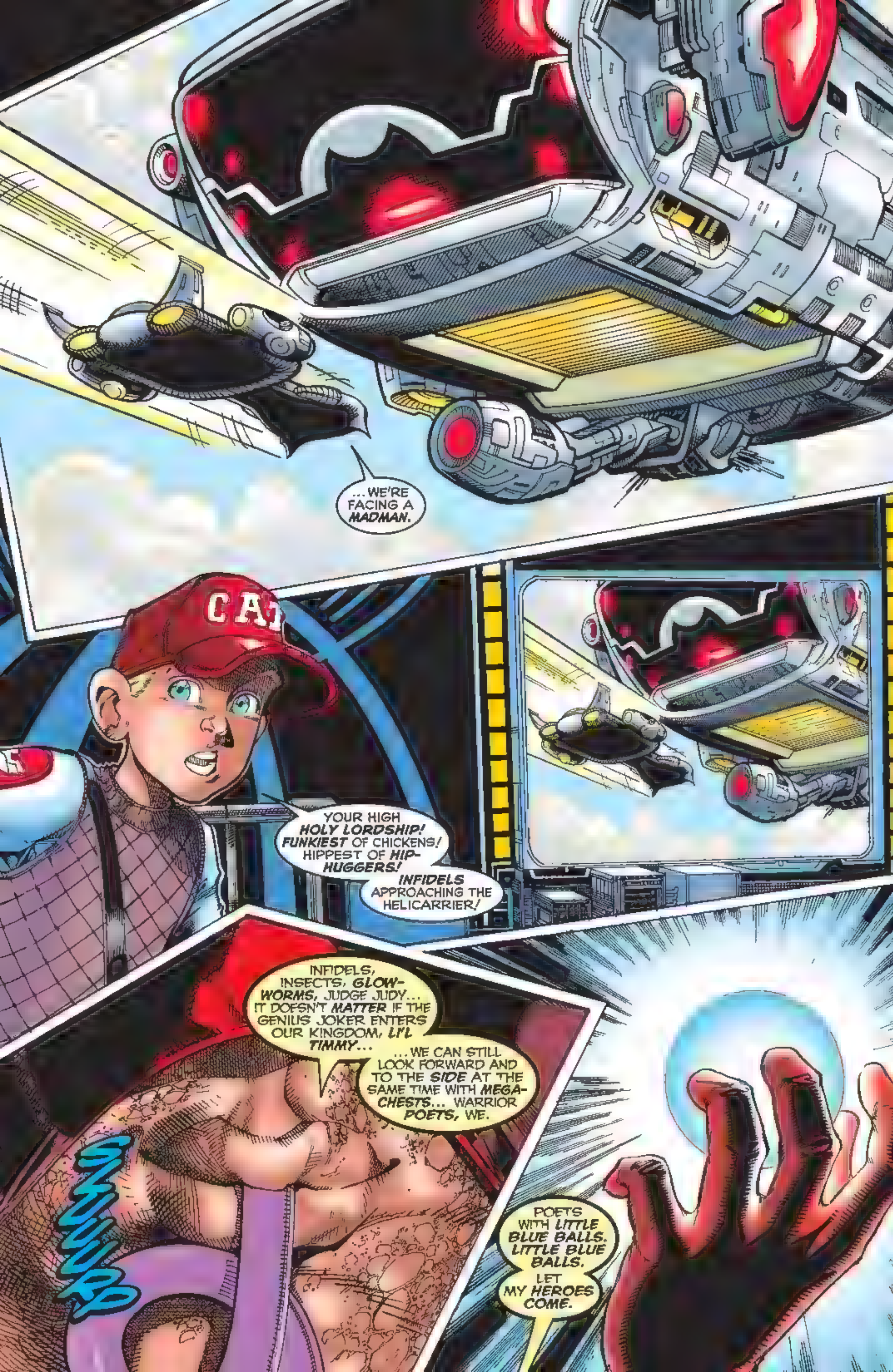

HARDLY S.H.I.E.L.D.'S FINEST HOUR, FRIENDS...
CRUNCH
IT DIDN'T TAKE A DEEP BRAIN PROBE TO FIGURE OUT THAT WE WERE DEALING WITH A FORCE OF NATURE... SOMETHING MORE THAN HUMAN...
SOMETHING WE COULDN'T HANDLE ALONE.
AS YOU MAY HAVE NOTICED...
...THERE'S A CERTAIN... DEARTH OF HEROES OUT THERE AT THE MOMENT...
...SO WE CALLED YOU.
MUST LOOK INTIMIDATING. MUST LOOK REGAL.
MUST USE LESS ROUGE...
KISS UP.
THAT'S WHY WE WERE FORMED, GENERAL DARLEGUNG... TO FILL THE GAP LEFT IN THE WAKE OF THE DEPARTED HEROES.
I'M GLAD YOU CALLED.
WE'RE GLAD YOU CALLED... "WE"... THE WHOLE TEAM, MISS THING... "WE".
THERE IS... A SECOND REASON. UPON READING YOUR PRESS RELEASE, WE HAVE CAUSE TO BELIEVE YOU MAY HAVE AN EDGE --
THAT WAS MY IDEA, THE PRESS RELEASE!
WOW, AND YOU LIKED IT?
I PICKED THE COLORS ALL BY MYSELF!
AND WHAT DID WE DISCUSS ABOUT SPEAKING IN PUBLIC...
...AMAZO-MAXI WOMAN...?
MMMMM
SCRITCH
YES. SORRY.
WHAT SPECIFICALLY DO YOU THINK WE CAN OFFER, SIR?
WAS IT THE PROMPT SERVICE? THE ITEMIZED BILLING?
THE FREE TOTE BAG?
NO... IT WAS KNOWLEDGE. THE MAN RESPONSIBLE FOR THE CARNAGE IN EGYPT...
KRUNNCH
...IS THE SAME MAN WHO ORGANIZED YOU INTO A TEAM. YOUR FORMER LEADER...
KRRUUNCH
DEADPOOL!

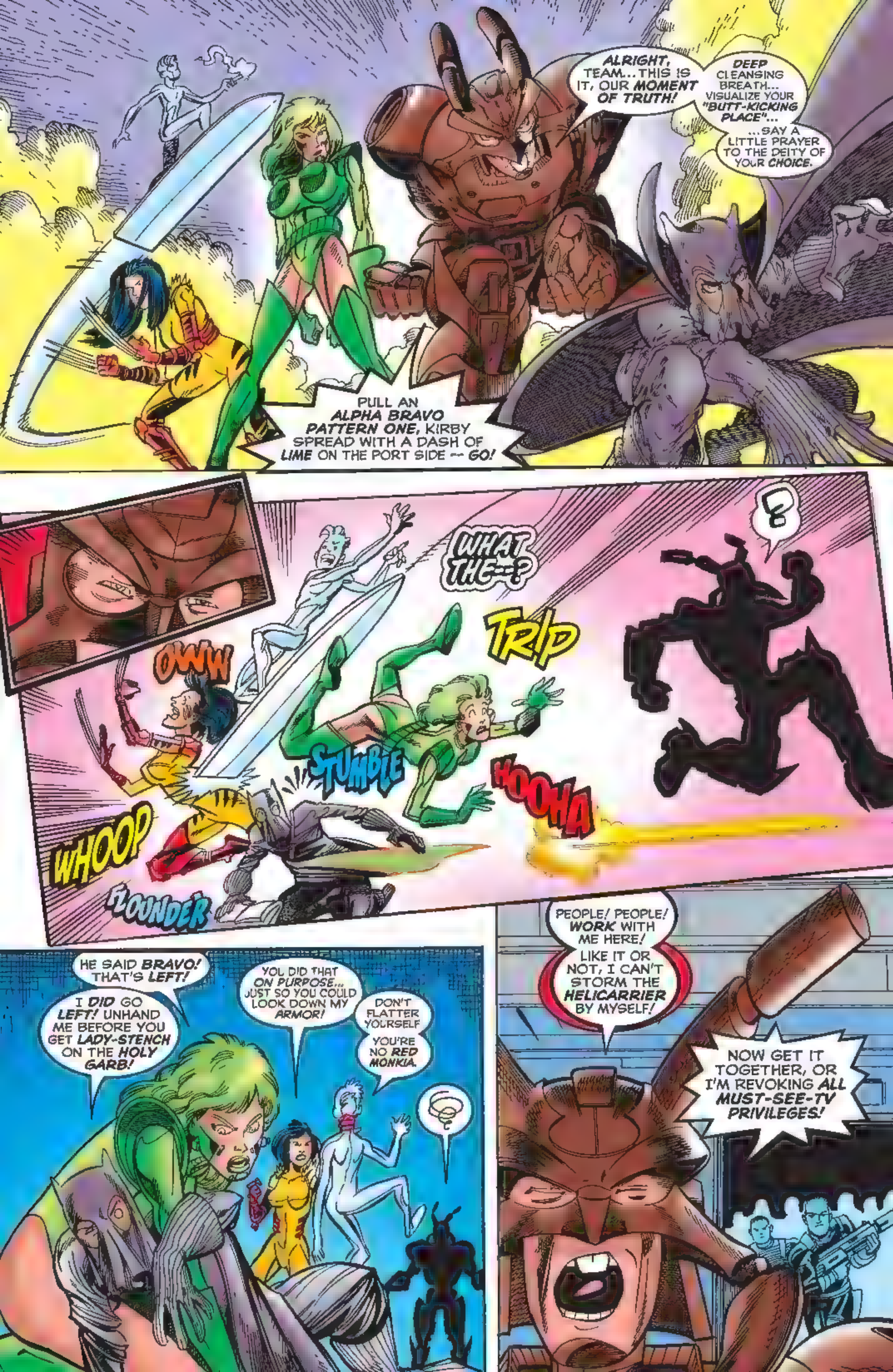

-- BZZT-- MALFUNCTION... 01010010...
NO...
GET THE &@#% OUTTA @*$%!
WHOA!
THIS MUST BE A **MISTAKE...** DEADPOOL IS THE **KINDEST,** MOST NOBLE --
-- HANDSOME, *INTELLIGENT* --
-- MOST ***TOGETHER*** HERO THIS WORLD HAS EVER ***KNOWN.***
AND WHAT A ***SNAPPY*** DRESSER...
EVEN THE SON OF WAKANDA ***TRUSTED*** HIM...
... HE WAS THE ***LAST AVENGER,*** BY GODS...
I POPPED A ***TRUSS*** WHEN I HEARD IT MYSELF, TROOPS. WE ***ALL*** REVERE THE GREAT DEADPOOL...
...BUT BELIEVE YOU ME, IT'S ***NO*** MISTAKE. AFTER THE INCIDENT, OUR TEAMS FOUND ***THIS*** --
A ***SWORD?*** BIG DEAL! THIS COULD BE ***ANYONE'S*** --
IT SAYS HERE, ***"PROPERTY OF DEADPOOL."***
HEY, I HAVE A *"PROPERTY OF* ***HOOTERS"*** T-SHIRT, BUT YOU DON'T SEE ME SURROUNDED BY ***TA-TAS,*** DO YOU?
MANT, THE MAN WHO KILLED THOSE AGENTS IS ***NOT*** YOUR FRIEND, HE'S A SICK, ***SICK*** MAN. ***SICK.*** DEMENTED AND ***SICK*** AND ***NOT*** WELL AT ALL. ***SICK.***
AND WE NEED YOU TO STOP HIS... HIS ***SICKNESS*** BEFORE HE KILLS AGAIN.
CAN WE COUNT ON ***YOU*** AND YOUR ***PEOPLE?***
WELL, TO BE PERFECTLY ***HONEST,*** SIR --
TO BE HONEST, THE ***ONLY*** QUESTION IS "HOW DO YOU WANT HIM ***GIFTWRAPPED,*** SIR?!" YOU'VE GOT A ***TEAM!***
UH, MARY, NOT TO DAMPEN YOUR ***ENTHUSIASM...*** BUT MAYBE YOU FORGOT WE'RE ***NOT READY...*** WE DON'T EVEN HAVE A TEAM ***NAME*** YET --
ONE THING, GENERAL... WE'LL NEED PROPER ***TRANSPORT.***

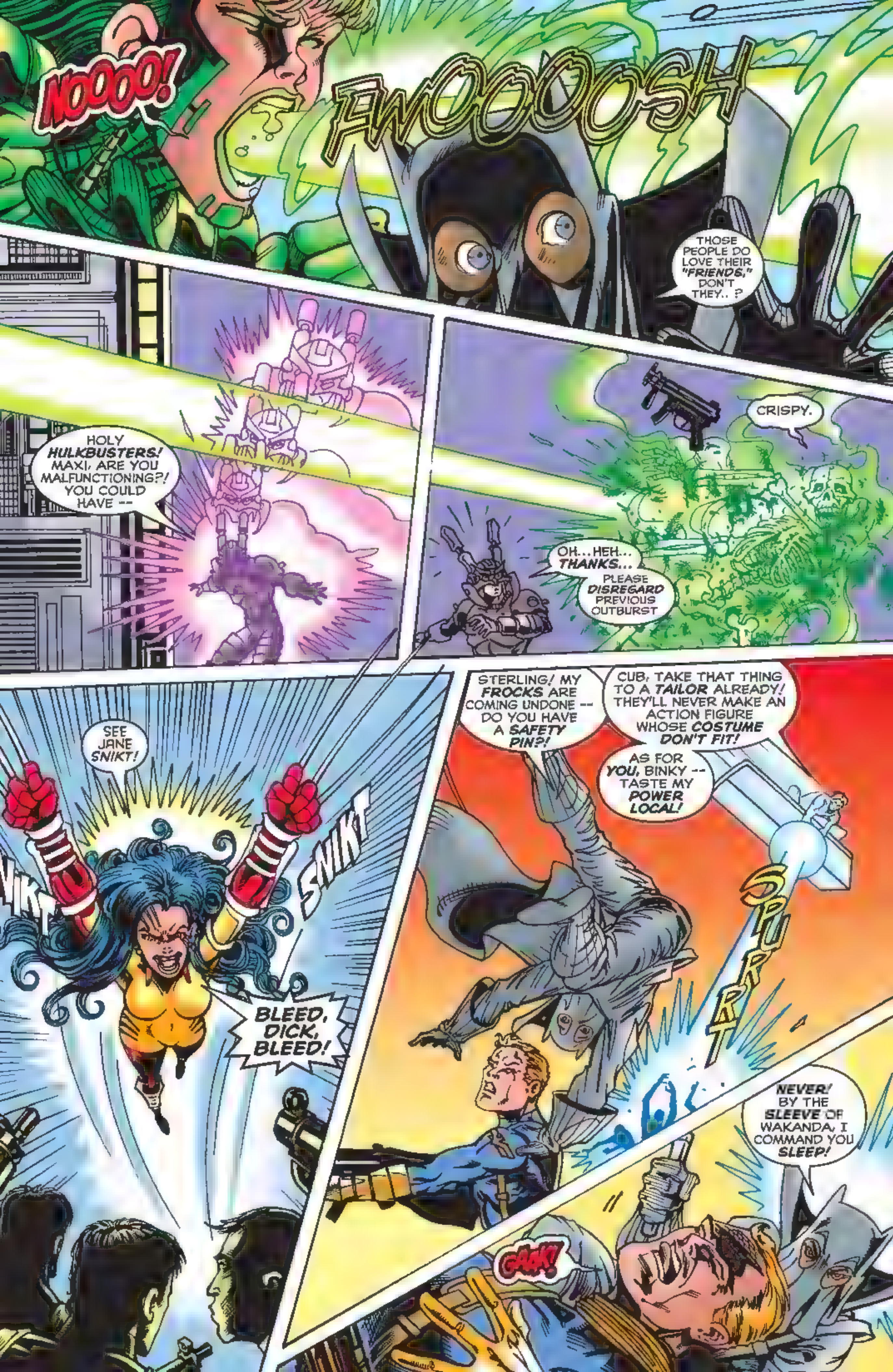

YOU FEEL THESE SEATS?!? THAT'S **CORINTHIAN**, BABY, **ALL** THE WAY! THE FF KNEW HOW TO TRAVEL IN **STYLE!**
I **REPEAT** -- THE PANTHER CUB DOES **NOT** SIT IN THE BACK!
DO YOU PEOPLE NOT REALIZE HOW PATENTLY **OFFENSIVE** IT IS TO HAVE THE **ONLY BLACK MEMBER** OF THE TEAM RIDE IN THE **BACK** OF THE **FANTASTICAR?!?** IT IS AN **OUTRAGE!**
Oooooh. WIND! I CAN HEAR THE **OCEAN** IN MY **HEAD!**
PERFECT. THE MODIFICATIONS WE MADE HAVE HAD *NO* ADVERSE EFFECTS ON THIS TUB.
WE'LL CATCH THE HELICARRIER IN *NO TIME*, AND KILL SOMETHING BEFORE *LUNCH.*
IT GOES **AWFULLY** FAST... MAYBE WE SHOULD FASTEN OUR **SEAT BELTS**... OR GET **HELMETS** MADE UP --
I ESTIMATE WE'VE GOT FIVE MINUTES 'TIL **BLOODSHED**, OH **"FEARLESS LEADER"**... FIGURED OUT A **PLAN** YET?
Uh... I'M STILL, Uh... WEIGHING OPTIONS, RUNNING **SCENARIOS** IN MY HEAD... YOU KNOW, **LEADER** STUFF. CATCH YOU UP IN A **SEC!**
THIS IS JUST LIKE THAT DREAM, WHERE I GO TO MY **MATH** TEST AND LEAVE MY **PANTS** AT HOME AND LI'L MARJIE **LAUGHS** AT ME... IT'S **HAPPENING** --
ONLY IT'S **WORSE** THAN CALCULUS... WE'RE GOING UP AGAINST... **HIM!** AND WE KNOW NOTHING! HOW CAN WE **POSSIBLY** TAKE DOWN THE MAN... WHO GAVE US **EVERYTHING?**

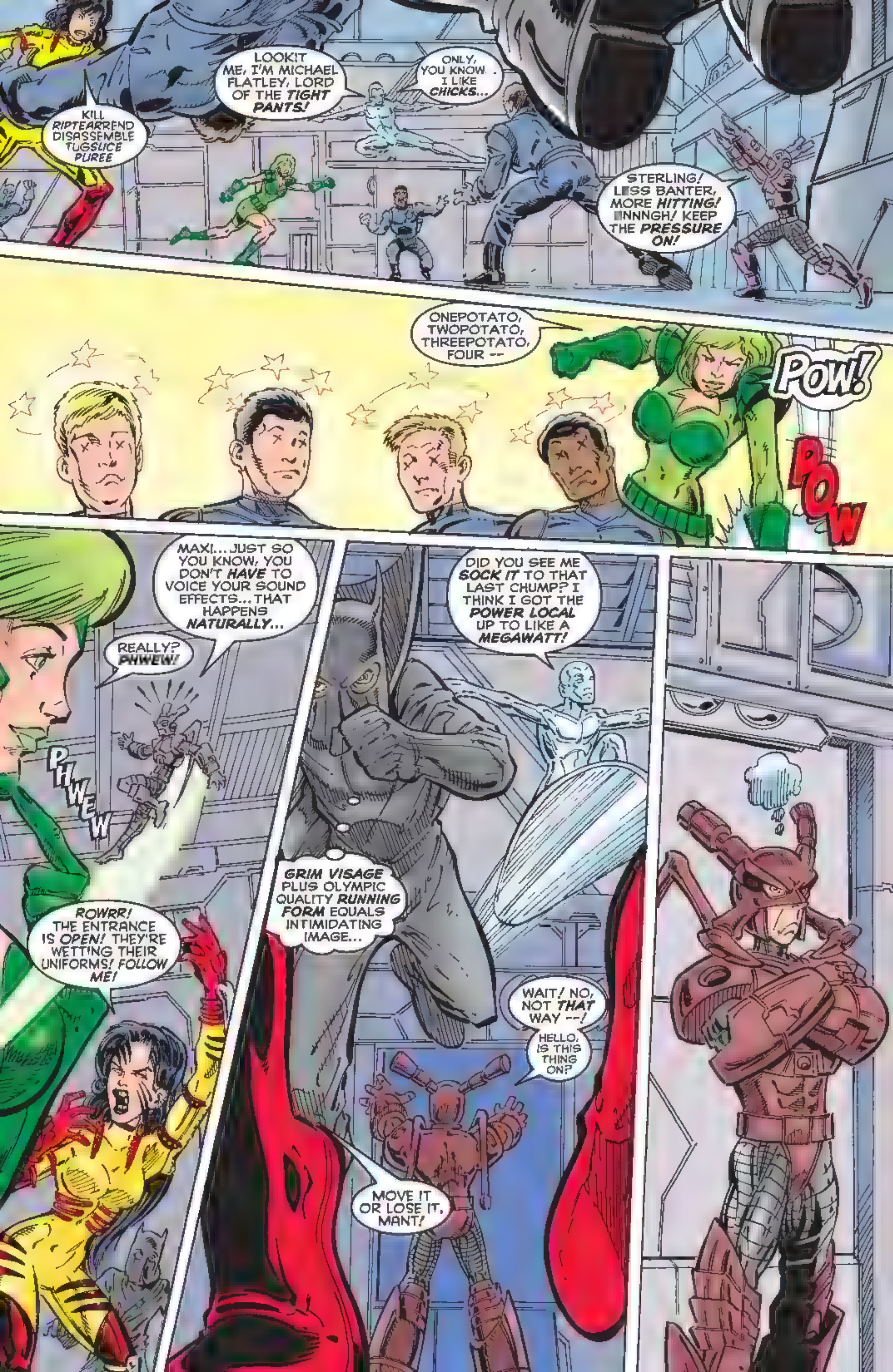

YOU... YOU MEAN YOU'RE NOT GOING TO BEAT ME UP? I DON'T UNDERSTAND...
YOU KNOW I'M NOT THE REAL ANT-MAN, DON'T YA, SWORDSMAN?
OF COURSE I KNOW THAT, ERNEST! YOU DON'T EXACTLY CARRY OFF THE SUIT AS WELL AS DR. PYM DID...
IT'S MY LOVE HANDLES... ISN'T IT? THEY GAVE ME AWAY. I'VE BEEN WORKING OUT. HONEST.
⋟SIGH⋞ ERNEST... WHY DID YOU DECIDE TO TAKE OFF YOUR JANITORIAL GEAR AND PUT ON THE ANT-MAN SUIT?
WELL... HE STOPPED COMING TO WORK. NO ONE ELSE SEEMED TO CARE, SO I FIGURED... SOMEONE OUGHTA DO SOMETHING.
EXACTLY. SOMEONE "OUGHTA."
NOW MORE THAN EVER, INJUSTICE AND GREED THREATEN TO CRUSH THIS WORLD. I AM THE LAST AVENGER...
IF THE TREATMENT I'M ABOUT TO UNDERGO FOR MY CANCER DOESN'T WORK... WELL, THE LAST AVENGER WILL BE A DEAD AVENGER.
THIS WORLD NEEDS HEROES, ERNEST... AND HEROES...
...HEROES NEED A LEADER.
YOU, ERNEST.
ME?
YES... WITH THE PROPER TRAINING, A DIET, AND SOME DICTION LESSONS... I BELIEVE YOU HAVE WHAT IT TAKES TO CARRY ON THE LEGACY.
B-BBUT-BUT WHO WOULD I LEAD...?

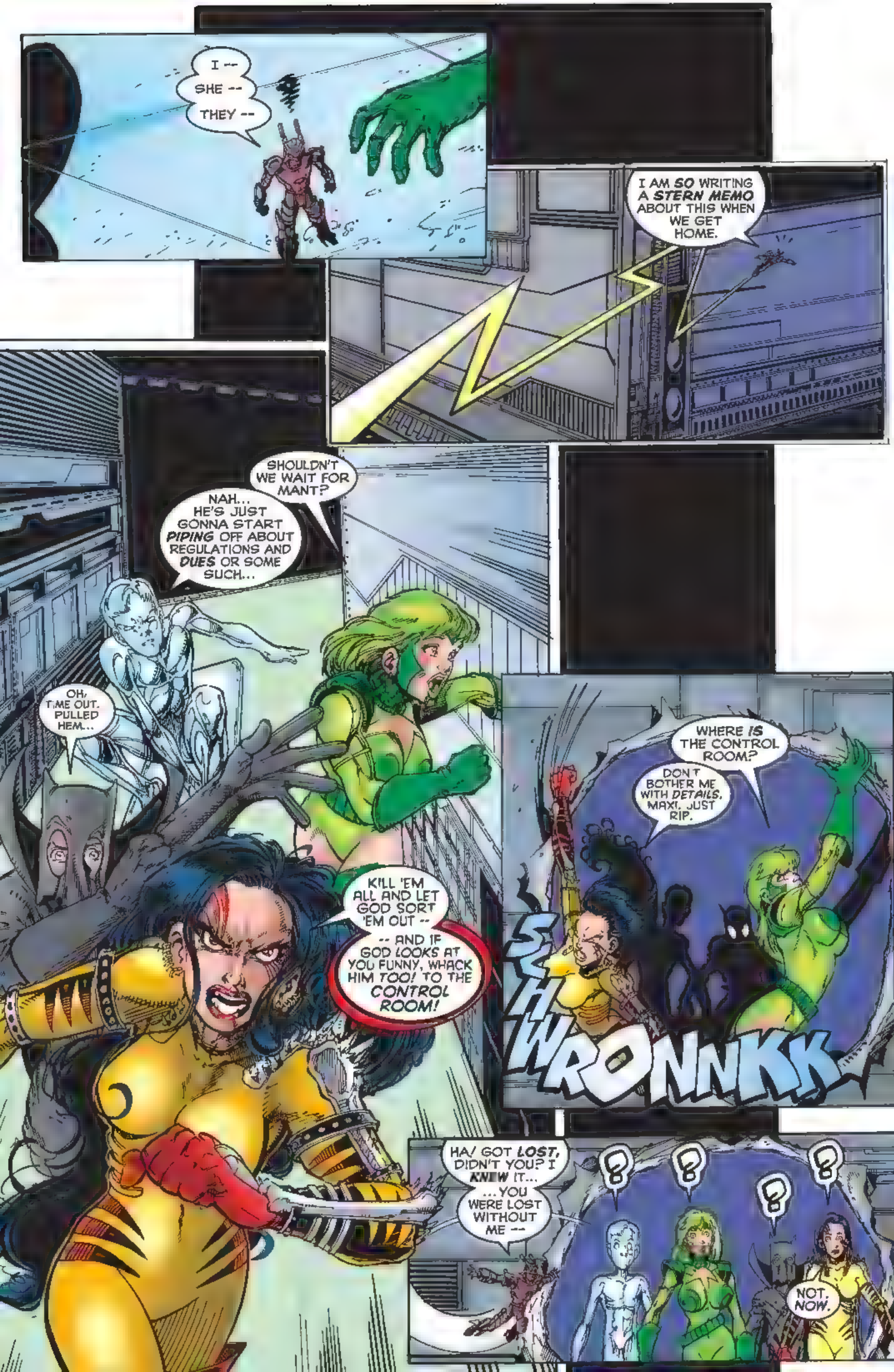

IN NEW JERSEY, THE ONCE MALEVOLENT SUPER-ADAPTOID HAS GAINED SENTIENCE... AND AN IDENTITY. SHE IS PERHAPS THE MOST POWERFUL ANDROID ON THE PLANET...
IN NEW YORK... THE SON OF A WAKANDAN VALET HAS TAKEN THE OUTLAWED NAME OF PANTHER TO AVENGE HIS MISSING KING. A YOUNG LIEGE IN TRAINING...
IN LAS VEGAS ..THE RESIDUAL ENERGIES LEFT IN THE WAKE OF THE SILVER SURFER'S PASSING HAVE CONGEALED, AND TAKEN ON A SHAPE... A FORM... HE IS SUBLIME POWER...
CANADA... A WOMAN WHO'D SPENT HER LIFE AS A VICTIM FINALLY FOUGHT BACK... AND WON.
A WARRIOR ARMED WITH THE REMAINS OF HER ATTACKER...
THESE... REMNANTS... FROM THE AGE OF HEROES HAVE GREAT POTENTIAL... SO LONG AS A STRONG FOUNDATION IS LAID.
I WILL TEACH YOU EVERYTHING I KNOW... AND YOU WILL MAKE ME PROUD. IF YOU'RE UP TO THE CHALLENGE...
WELL...
BEATS MOPPING TOILETS, RIGHT?
I CAN'T BELIEVE I SAID THAT. WHAT A DORK...
BUT STILL, HE DID IT. TRUSTED ME AND TRAINED ME, EVEN AFTER THE CANCER WENT BAD... EVEN AFTER HE STOPPED CALLING HIMSELF SWORDSMAN --
HE BELIEVED IN ME... AND I WON'T LET HIM DOWN!
HEY, MANTY... YOU DON'T REALLY BELIEVE IT'S 'POOL, DO YOU? THE GUY WAS THE MODEL CITIZEN. ALL MEDITATE ON THIS AND FORTUNE COOKIE THAT...
YOU REALLY BELIEVE HE COULD HAVE GONE BAD?
MAYBE IN SOME HIDEOUS ALTERNATE VERSION OF OUR OWN WORLD, STERLING...
SOME FETID, STINKING, CESSPOOL OF A PARALLEL UNIVERSE... BUT NOT HERE...NOT IN REALITY.
DEADPOOL IS A HERO. TODAY...

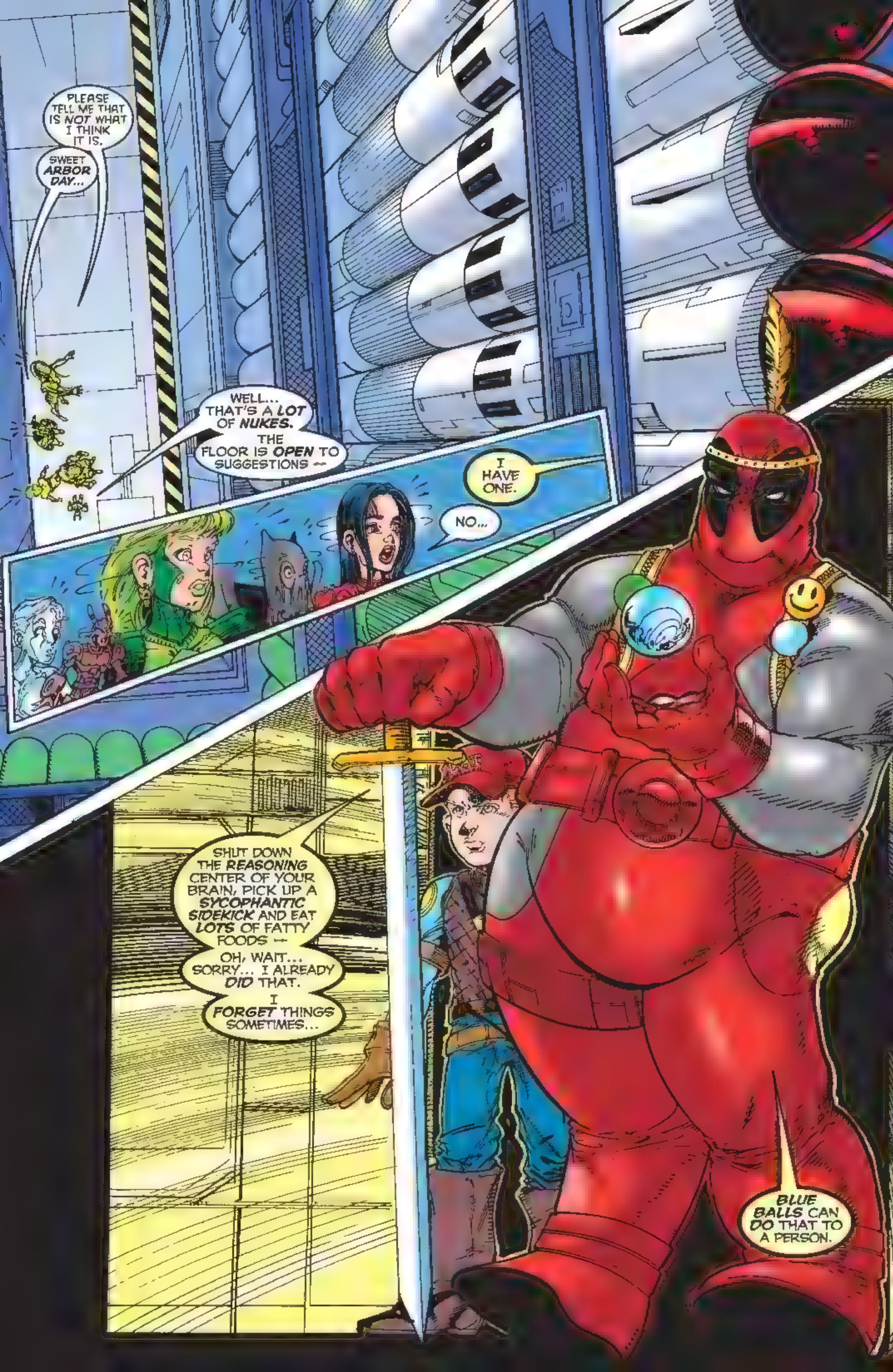

...WE'RE FACING A *MADMAN.*
CAT
YOUR HIGH *HOLY LORDSHIP! FUNKIEST* OF CHICKENS! HIPPEST OF *HIP-HUGGERS!*
INFIDELS APPROACHING THE HELICARRIER!
INFIDELS, INSECTS, *GLOW-WORMS,* JUDGE JUDY... IT DOESN'T *MATTER* IF THE GENIUS JOKER ENTERS OUR KINGDOM, *LI'L TIMMY...*
...WE CAN STILL LOOK FORWARD AND TO THE *SIDE* AT THE SAME TIME WITH *MEGA-CHESTS...* WARRIOR *POETS,* WE.
SHHURP
POETS WITH *LITTLE BLUE BALLS. LITTLE BLUE BALLS.* LET MY *HEROES* COME.

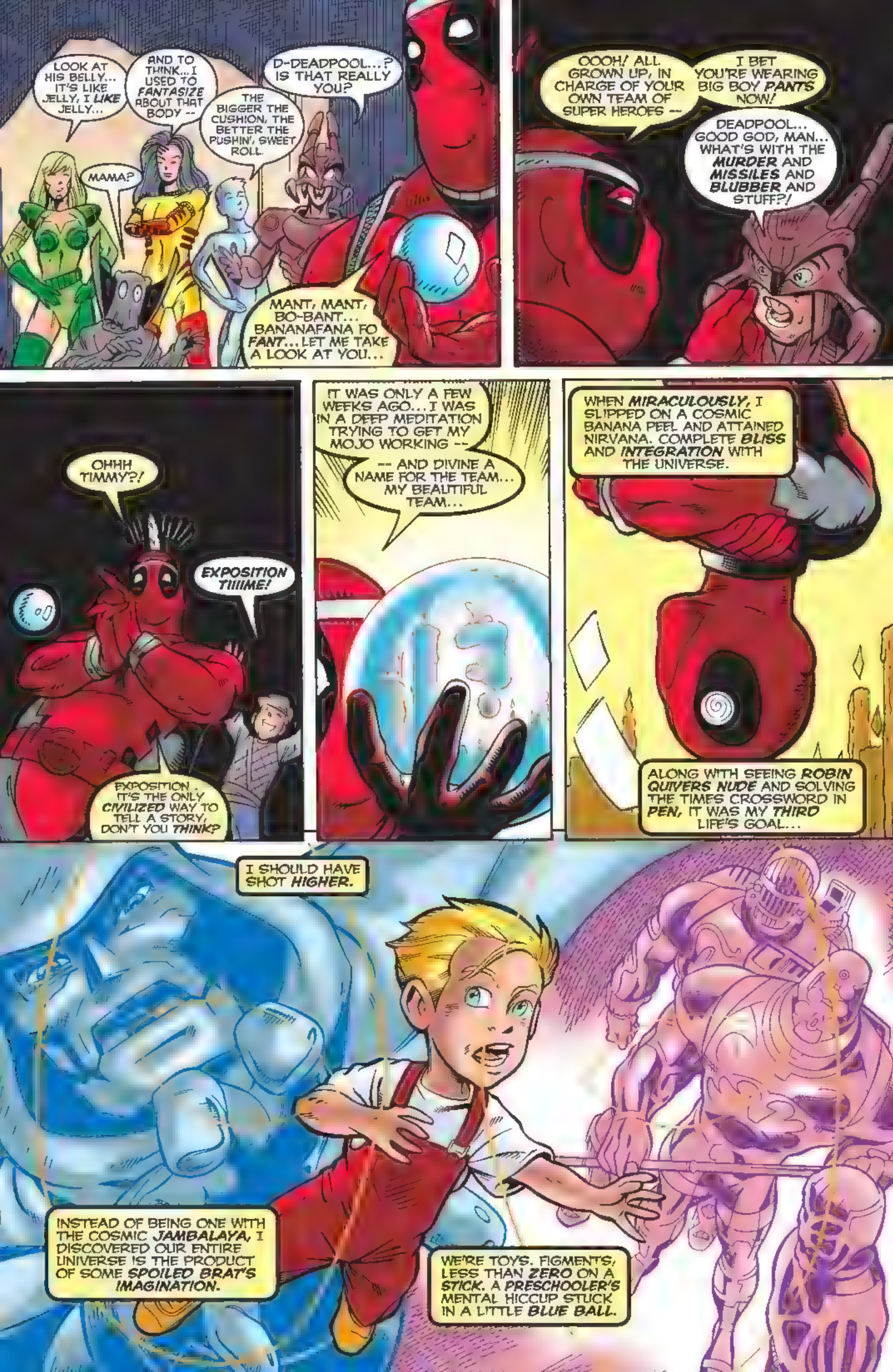

ALRIGHT, TEAM... THIS IS IT, OUR MOMENT OF TRUTH!
DEEP CLEANSING BREATH... VISUALIZE YOUR "BUTT-KICKING PLACE"... ...SAY A LITTLE PRAYER TO THE DEITY OF YOUR CHOICE.
PULL AN ALPHA BRAVO PATTERN ONE, KIRBY SPREAD WITH A DASH OF LIME ON THE PORT SIDE -- GO!
WHAT THE--?
OWW
TRIP
STUMBLE
HOOHA
WHOOP
FLOUNDER
HE SAID BRAVO! THAT'S LEFT!
I DID GO LEFT! UNHAND ME BEFORE YOU GET LADY-STENCH ON THE HOLY GARB!
YOU DID THAT ON PURPOSE... JUST SO YOU COULD LOOK DOWN MY ARMOR!
DON'T FLATTER YOURSELF. YOU'RE NO RED MONKIA.
PEOPLE! PEOPLE! WORK WITH ME HERE! LIKE IT OR NOT, I CAN'T STORM THE HELICARRIER BY MYSELF!
NOW GET IT TOGETHER, OR I'M REVOKING ALL MUST-SEE-TV PRIVILEGES!

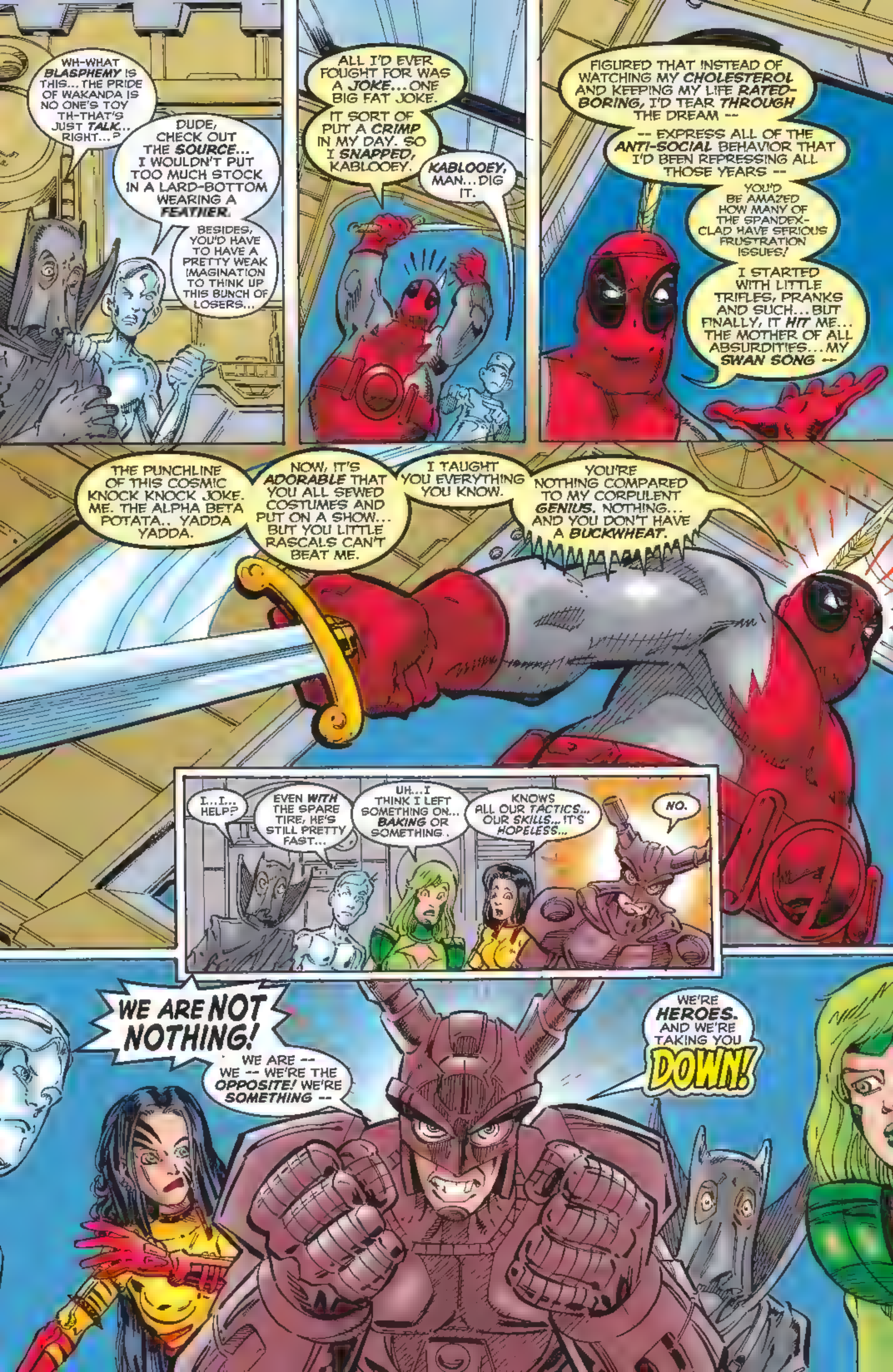

NOOOO!
FWOOOOOSH
THOSE PEOPLE DO LOVE THEIR "FRIENDS," DON'T THEY.. ?
HOLY HULKBUSTERS! MAXI, ARE YOU MALFUNCTIONING?! YOU COULD HAVE --
CRISPY.
OH...HEH... THANKS... PLEASE DISREGARD PREVIOUS OUTBURST
SEE JANE SNIKT!
SNIKT
SNIKT
BLEED, DICK, BLEED!
STERLING! MY FROCKS ARE COMING UNDONE -- DO YOU HAVE A SAFETY PIN?!
CUB, TAKE THAT THING TO A TAILOR ALREADY! THEY'LL NEVER MAKE AN ACTION FIGURE WHOSE COSTUME DON'T FIT!
AS FOR YOU, BINKY -- TASTE MY POWER LOCAL!
SPURRT
NEVER! BY THE SLEEVE OF WAKANDA, I COMMAND YOU SLEEP!
GAAK!

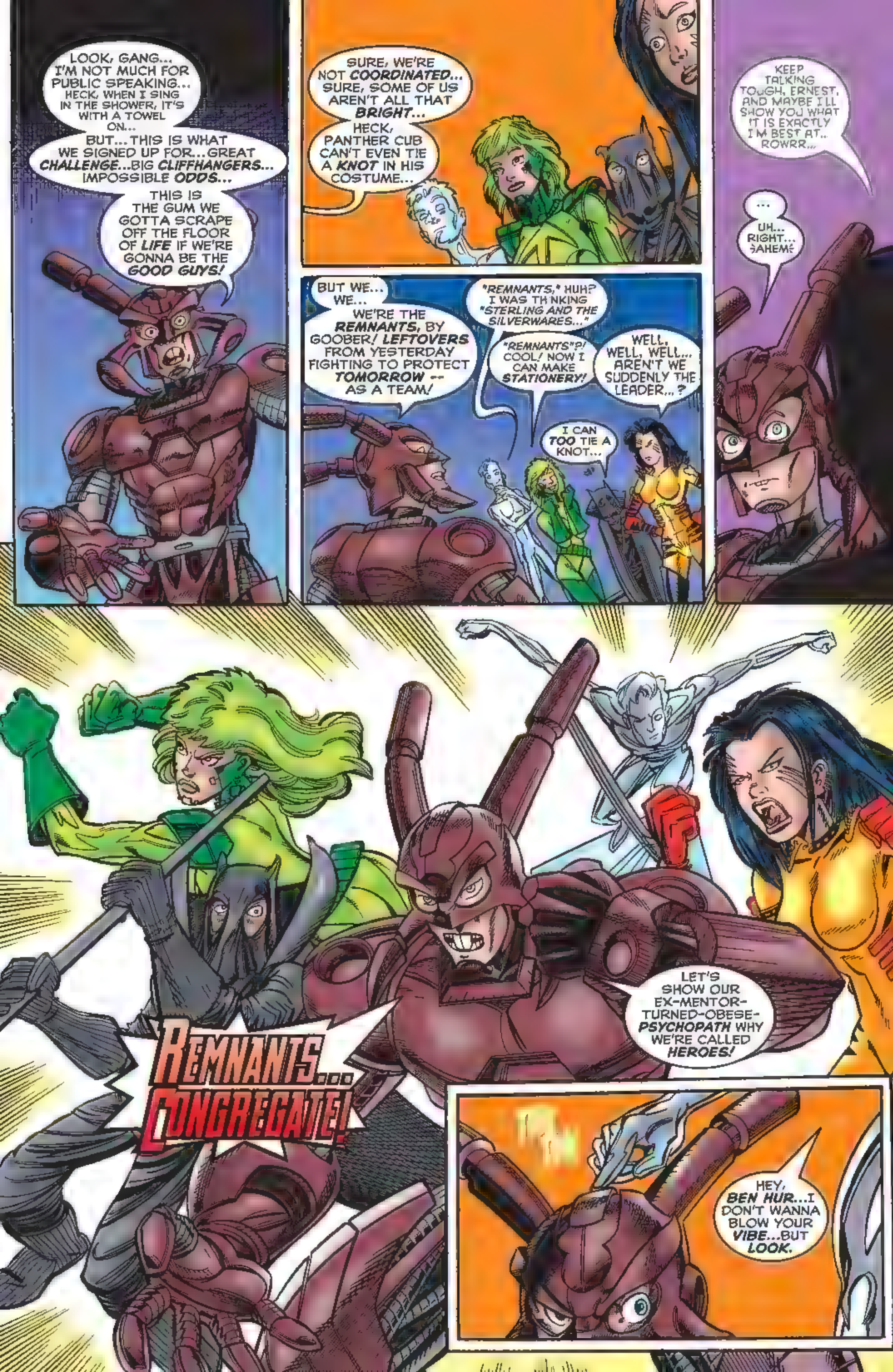

KILL RIPTEARREND DISASSEMBLE TUGSLICE PUREE
LOOKIT ME, I'M MICHAEL FLATLEY, LORD OF THE TIGHT PANTS!
ONLY, YOU KNOW... I LIKE CHICKS...
STERLING! LESS BANTER, MORE HITTING! UNNNGH! KEEP THE PRESSURE ON!
ONEPOTATO, TWOPOTATO, THREEPOTATO, FOUR --
POW!
POW
MAXI... JUST SO YOU KNOW, YOU DON'T HAVE TO VOICE YOUR SOUND EFFECTS... THAT HAPPENS NATURALLY...
REALLY? PHWEW!
PHWEW
ROWRR! THE ENTRANCE IS OPEN! THEY'RE WETTING THEIR UNIFORMS! FOLLOW ME!
DID YOU SEE ME SOCK IT TO THAT LAST CHUMP? I THINK I GOT THE POWER LOCAL UP TO LIKE A MEGAWATT!
GRIM VISAGE PLUS OLYMPIC QUALITY RUNNING FORM EQUALS INTIMIDATING IMAGE...
WAIT! NO, NOT THAT WAY --!
HELLO, IS THIS THING ON?
MOVE IT OR LOSE IT, MANT!

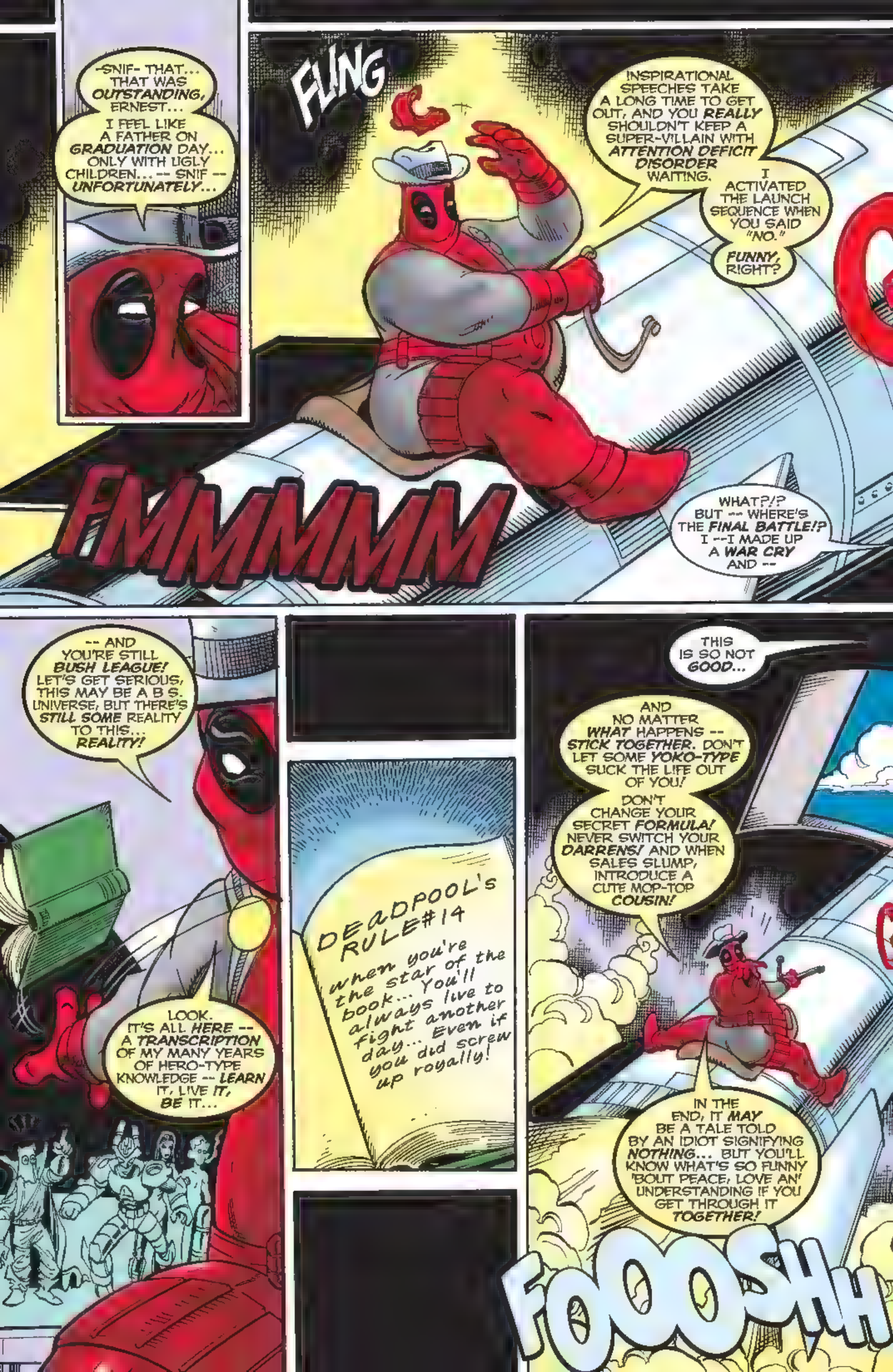

I --
SHE --
THEY --
I AM SO WRITING A STERN MEMO ABOUT THIS WHEN WE GET HOME.
SHOULDN'T WE WAIT FOR MANT?
NAH... HE'S JUST GONNA START PIPING OFF ABOUT REGULATIONS AND DUES OR SOME SUCH...
OH, TIME OUT. PULLED HEM...
KILL 'EM ALL AND LET GOD SORT 'EM OUT --
-- AND IF GOD LOOKS AT YOU FUNNY, WHACK HIM TOO! TO THE CONTROL ROOM!
WHERE IS THE CONTROL ROOM?
DON'T BOTHER ME WITH DETAILS, MAXI. JUST RIP.
SHWRONNKK
HA! GOT LOST, DIDN'T YOU? I KNEW IT...
...YOU WERE LOST WITHOUT ME --
NOT. NOW.

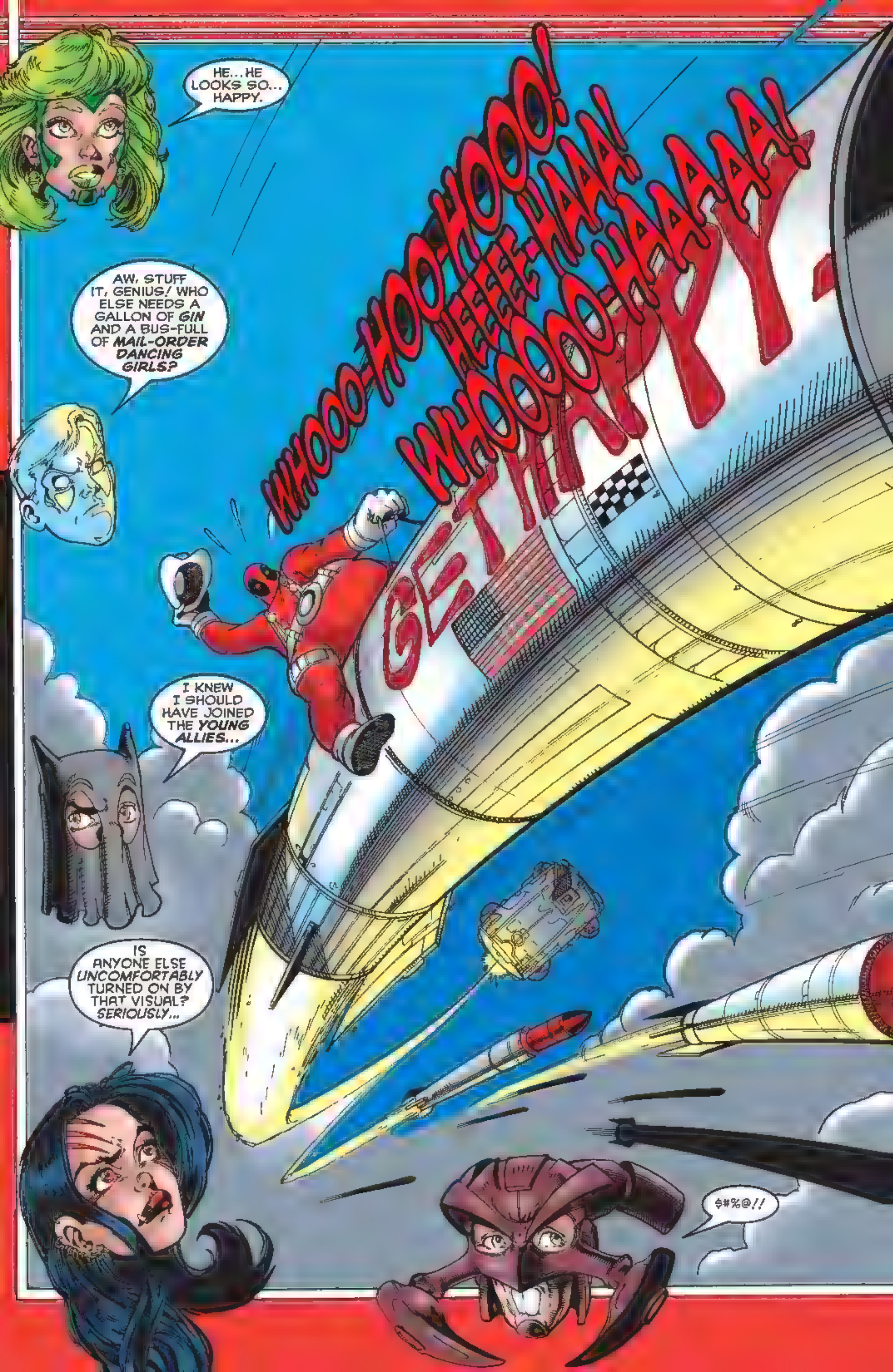

PLEASE TELL ME THAT IS NOT WHAT I THINK IT IS.
SWEET ARBOR DAY...
WELL... THAT'S A LOT OF NUKES. THE FLOOR IS OPEN TO SUGGESTIONS --
I HAVE ONE.
NO...
SHUT DOWN THE REASONING CENTER OF YOUR BRAIN, PICK UP A SYCOPHANTIC SIDEKICK AND EAT LOTS OF FATTY FOODS --
OH, WAIT... SORRY... I ALREADY DID THAT.
I FORGET THINGS SOMETIMES...
BLUE BALLS CAN DO THAT TO A PERSON.

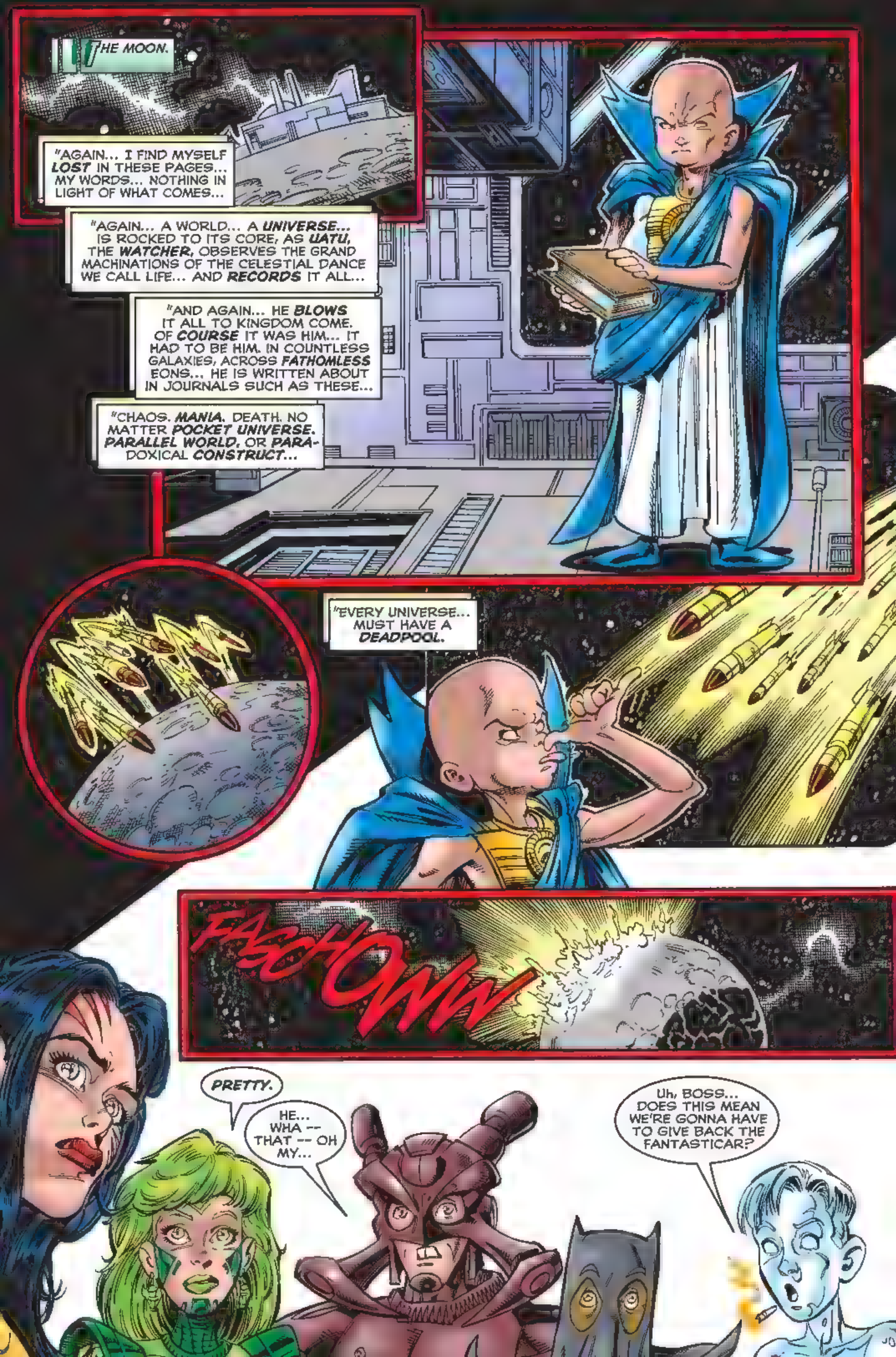

LOOK AT HIS BELLY... IT'S LIKE JELLY, I *LIKE* JELLY...
AND TO THINK...I USED TO *FANTASIZE* ABOUT THAT BODY --
MAMA?
THE BIGGER THE CUSHION, THE BETTER THE PUSHIN', SWEET ROLL.
D-DEADPOOL...? IS THAT REALLY YOU?
MANT, MANT, BO-BANT... BANANAFANA FO *FANT*...LET ME TAKE A LOOK AT YOU...
OOOH! ALL GROWN UP, IN CHARGE OF YOUR OWN TEAM OF SUPER HEROES --
I BET YOU'RE WEARING BIG BOY *PANTS* NOW!
DEADPOOL... GOOD GOD, MAN... WHAT'S WITH THE *MURDER* AND *MISSILES* AND *BLUBBER* AND STUFF?!
OHHH TIMMY?!
EXPOSITION TIIIIME!
EXPOSITION. IT'S THE ONLY *CIVILIZED* WAY TO TELL A STORY, DON'T YOU *THINK?*
IT WAS ONLY A FEW WEEKS AGO...I WAS IN A DEEP MEDITATION TRYING TO GET MY MOJO WORKING --
-- AND DIVINE A NAME FOR THE TEAM... MY BEAUTIFUL TEAM...
WHEN *MIRACULOUSLY*, I SLIPPED ON A COSMIC BANANA PEEL AND ATTAINED NIRVANA. COMPLETE *BLISS* AND *INTEGRATION* WITH THE UNIVERSE.
ALONG WITH SEEING *ROBIN QUIVERS NUDE* AND SOLVING THE TIMES CROSSWORD IN *PEN*, IT WAS MY *THIRD* LIFE'S GOAL...
I SHOULD HAVE SHOT *HIGHER*.
INSTEAD OF BEING ONE WITH THE COSMIC *JAMBALAYA*, I DISCOVERED OUR ENTIRE UNIVERSE IS THE PRODUCT OF SOME *SPOILED BRAT'S IMAGINATION*.
WE'RE TOYS. FIGMENTS, LESS THAN *ZERO* ON A *STICK*. A *PRESCHOOLER'S* MENTAL HICCUP STUCK IN A LITTLE *BLUE BALL*.

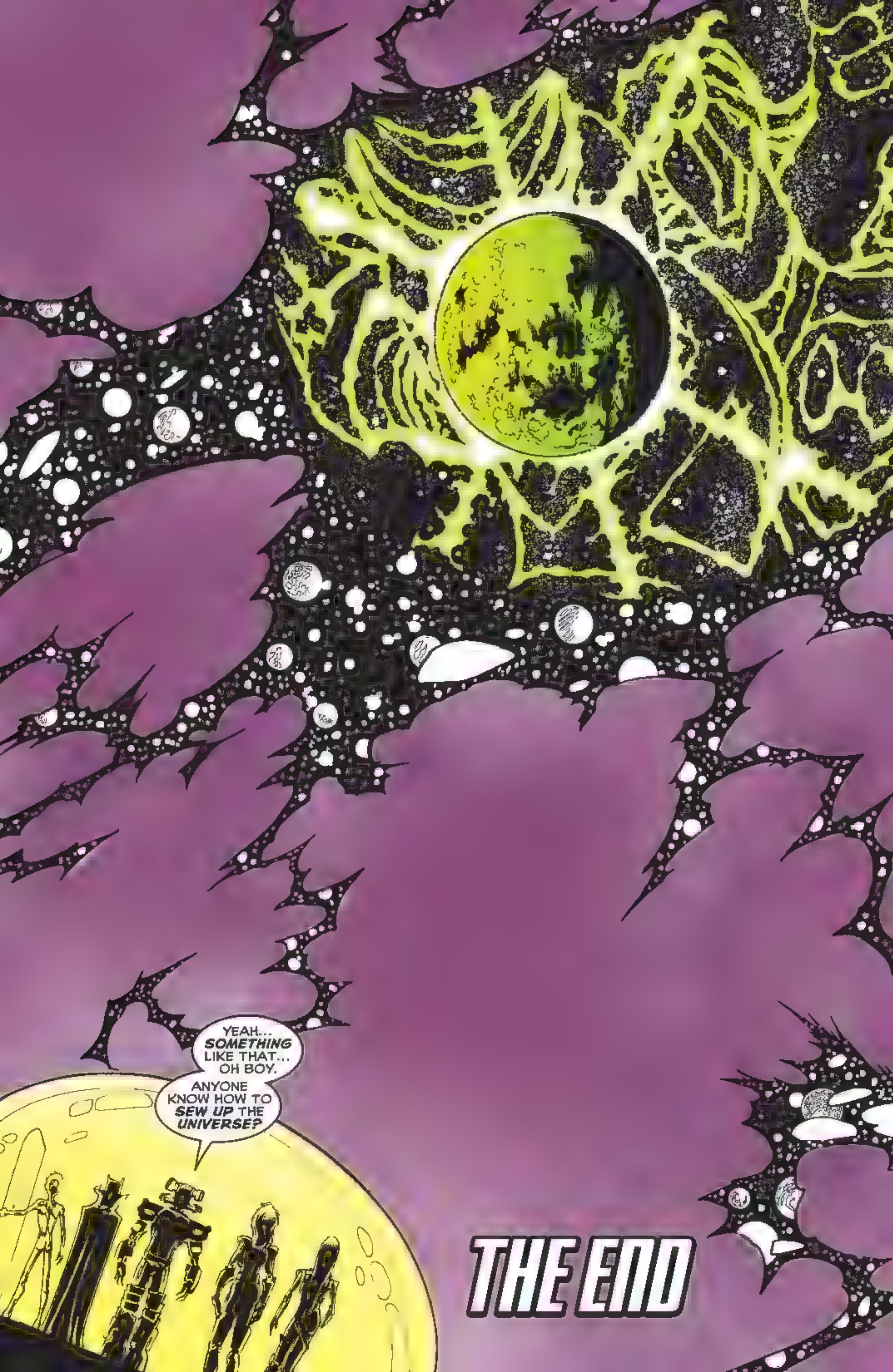

WH-WHAT **BLASPHEMY** IS THIS... THE PRIDE OF WAKANDA IS NO ONE'S TOY TH-THAT'S JUST **TALK**... RIGHT...?
DUDE, CHECK OUT THE **SOURCE**... I WOULDN'T PUT TOO MUCH STOCK IN A LARD-BOTTOM WEARING A **FEATHER**.
BESIDES, YOU'D HAVE TO HAVE A PRETTY WEAK IMAGINATION TO THINK UP THIS BUNCH OF LOSERS...
ALL I'D EVER FOUGHT FOR WAS A **JOKE**...ONE BIG FAT JOKE.
IT SORT OF PUT A **CRIMP** IN MY DAY. SO I **SNAPPED**, KABLOOEY.
KABLOOEY, MAN...DIG IT.
FIGURED THAT INSTEAD OF WATCHING MY **CHOLESTEROL** AND KEEPING MY LIFE **RATED-BORING**, I'D TEAR **THROUGH** THE DREAM --
-- EXPRESS ALL OF THE **ANTI-SOCIAL** BEHAVIOR THAT I'D BEEN REPRESSING ALL THOSE YEARS --
YOU'D BE AMAZED HOW MANY OF THE SPANDEX-CLAD HAVE SERIOUS FRUSTRATION ISSUES!
I STARTED WITH LITTLE TRIFLES, PRANKS AND SUCH... BUT FINALLY, IT **HIT** ME... THE MOTHER OF ALL ABSURDITIES... MY **SWAN SONG** --
THE PUNCHLINE OF THIS COSMIC KNOCK KNOCK JOKE. ME. THE ALPHA BETA POTATA.. YADDA YADDA.
NOW, IT'S **ADORABLE** THAT YOU ALL SEWED COSTUMES AND PUT ON A SHOW... BUT YOU LITTLE RASCALS CAN'T BEAT ME.
I TAUGHT YOU EVERYTHING YOU KNOW.
YOU'RE NOTHING COMPARED TO MY CORPULENT **GENIUS**. NOTHING... AND YOU DON'T HAVE A **BUCKWHEAT**.
I...I... HELP?
EVEN **WITH** THE SPARE TIRE, HE'S STILL PRETTY FAST...
UH...I THINK I LEFT SOMETHING ON... **BAKING** OR SOMETHING.
KNOWS ALL OUR **TACTICS**... OUR **SKILLS**... IT'S **HOPELESS**...
NO.
WE ARE NOT NOTHING!
WE ARE -- WE -- WE'RE THE **OPPOSITE!** WE'RE **SOMETHING** --
WE'RE **HEROES.** AND WE'RE TAKING YOU **DOWN!**

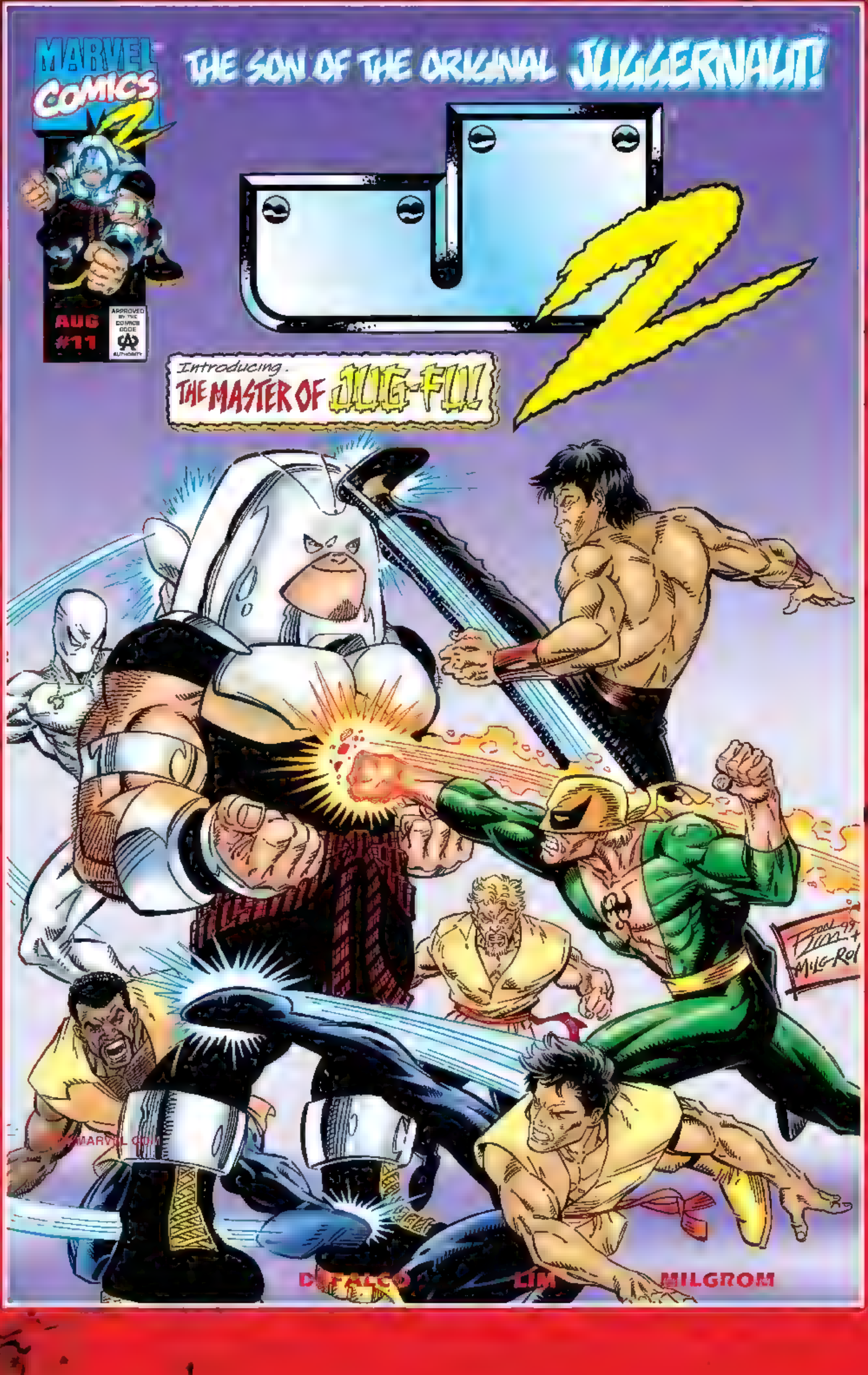

LOOK, GANG... I'M NOT MUCH FOR PUBLIC SPEAKING... HECK, WHEN I SING IN THE SHOWER, IT'S WITH A TOWEL ON...
BUT... THIS IS WHAT WE SIGNED UP FOR... GREAT **CHALLENGE**... BIG **CLIFFHANGERS**... IMPOSSIBLE **ODDS**...
THIS IS THE GUM WE GOTTA SCRAPE OFF THE FLOOR OF **LIFE** IF WE'RE GONNA BE THE **GOOD GUYS!**
SURE, WE'RE NOT **COORDINATED**... SURE, SOME OF US AREN'T ALL THAT **BRIGHT**...
HECK, PANTHER CUB CAN'T EVEN TIE A **KNOT** IN HIS COSTUME...
KEEP TALKING TOUGH, ERNEST, AND MAYBE I'LL SHOW YOU WHAT IT IS EXACTLY I'M BEST AT... ROWRR...
...
UH... RIGHT... AHEM!
BUT WE... WE...
WE'RE THE **REMNANTS**, BY GOOBER! **LEFTOVERS** FROM YESTERDAY FIGHTING TO PROTECT **TOMORROW** -- AS A TEAM!
"REMNANTS," HUH? I WAS THINKING "STERLING AND THE SILVERWARES..."
"REMNANTS"?! COOL! NOW I CAN MAKE **STATIONERY!**
WELL, WELL, WELL... AREN'T WE SUDDENLY THE LEADER...?
I CAN **TOO** TIE A KNOT...
LET'S SHOW OUR EX-MENTOR-TURNED-OBESE-**PSYCHOPATH** WHY WE'RE CALLED **HEROES!**
REMNANTS... CONGREGATE!
HEY, **BEN HUR**... I DON'T WANNA BLOW YOUR **VIBE**... BUT **LOOK.**


-SNIF- THAT... THAT WAS *OUTSTANDING,* ERNEST... I FEEL LIKE A FATHER ON *GRADUATION* DAY... ONLY WITH UGLY CHILDREN... -- SNIF -- *UNFORTUNATELY*...
FLING
INSPIRATIONAL SPEECHES TAKE A LONG TIME TO GET OUT, AND YOU *REALLY* SHOULDN'T KEEP A SUPER-VILLAIN WITH *ATTENTION DEFICIT DISORDER* WAITING.
I ACTIVATED THE LAUNCH SEQUENCE WHEN YOU SAID *"NO."*
FUNNY, RIGHT?
FMMMMMM
WHAT?!? BUT -- WHERE'S THE *FINAL BATTLE!?* I --I MADE UP A *WAR CRY* AND --
-- AND YOU'RE STILL *BUSH LEAGUE!* LET'S GET SERIOUS, THIS MAY BE A B.S. UNIVERSE, BUT THERE'S *STILL SOME* REALITY TO THIS... *REALITY!*
LOOK. IT'S ALL *HERE* -- A *TRANSCRIPTION* OF MY MANY YEARS OF HERO-TYPE KNOWLEDGE -- *LEARN* IT, LIVE *IT,* *BE* IT...
DEADPOOL's RULE#14
when you're the star of the book... You'll always live to fight another day... Even if you did screw up royally!
THIS IS SO NOT *GOOD*...
AND NO MATTER *WHAT* HAPPENS -- *STICK TOGETHER.* DON'T LET SOME *YOKO-TYPE* SUCK THE LIFE OUT OF YOU!
DON'T CHANGE YOUR SECRET *FORMULA!* NEVER SWITCH YOUR *DARRENS!* AND WHEN SALES SLUMP, INTRODUCE A CUTE MOP-TOP *COUSIN!*
IN THE END, IT *MAY* BE A TALE TOLD BY AN IDIOT SIGNIFYING *NOTHING*... BUT YOU'LL KNOW WHAT'S SO FUNNY 'BOUT PEACE, LOVE AN' UNDERSTANDING IF YOU GET THROUGH IT *TOGETHER!*
FOOOSHH


HE... HE LOOKS SO... HAPPY.
WHOOO-HOO-HOOO! YEEEE-HAAA! WHOOOO-HAAAA!
GET HAPPY
AW, STUFF IT, GENIUS! WHO ELSE NEEDS A GALLON OF *GIN* AND A BUS-FULL OF *MAIL-ORDER DANCING GIRLS?*
I KNEW I SHOULD HAVE JOINED THE *YOUNG ALLIES...*
IS ANYONE ELSE *UNCOMFORTABLY* TURNED ON BY THAT VISUAL? *SERIOUSLY...*
$#%@!!


THE MOON.
"AGAIN... I FIND MYSELF LOST IN THESE PAGES... MY WORDS... NOTHING IN LIGHT OF WHAT COMES...
"AGAIN... A WORLD... A UNIVERSE... IS ROCKED TO ITS CORE, AS UATU, THE WATCHER, OBSERVES THE GRAND MACHINATIONS OF THE CELESTIAL DANCE WE CALL LIFE... AND RECORDS IT ALL...
"AND AGAIN... HE BLOWS IT ALL TO KINGDOM COME. OF COURSE IT WAS HIM... IT HAD TO BE HIM. IN COUNTLESS GALAXIES, ACROSS FATHOMLESS EONS... HE IS WRITTEN ABOUT IN JOURNALS SUCH AS THESE...
"CHAOS. MANIA. DEATH. NO MATTER POCKET UNIVERSE, PARALLEL WORLD, OR PARADOXICAL CONSTRUCT...
"EVERY UNIVERSE... MUST HAVE A DEADPOOL.
FASCHOWW
PRETTY.
HE... WHA -- THAT -- OH MY...
Uh, BOSS... DOES THIS MEAN WE'RE GONNA HAVE TO GIVE BACK THE FANTASTICAR?


YEAH... **SOMETHING** LIKE THAT... OH BOY.
ANYONE KNOW HOW TO **SEW UP** THE **UNIVERSE?**
THE END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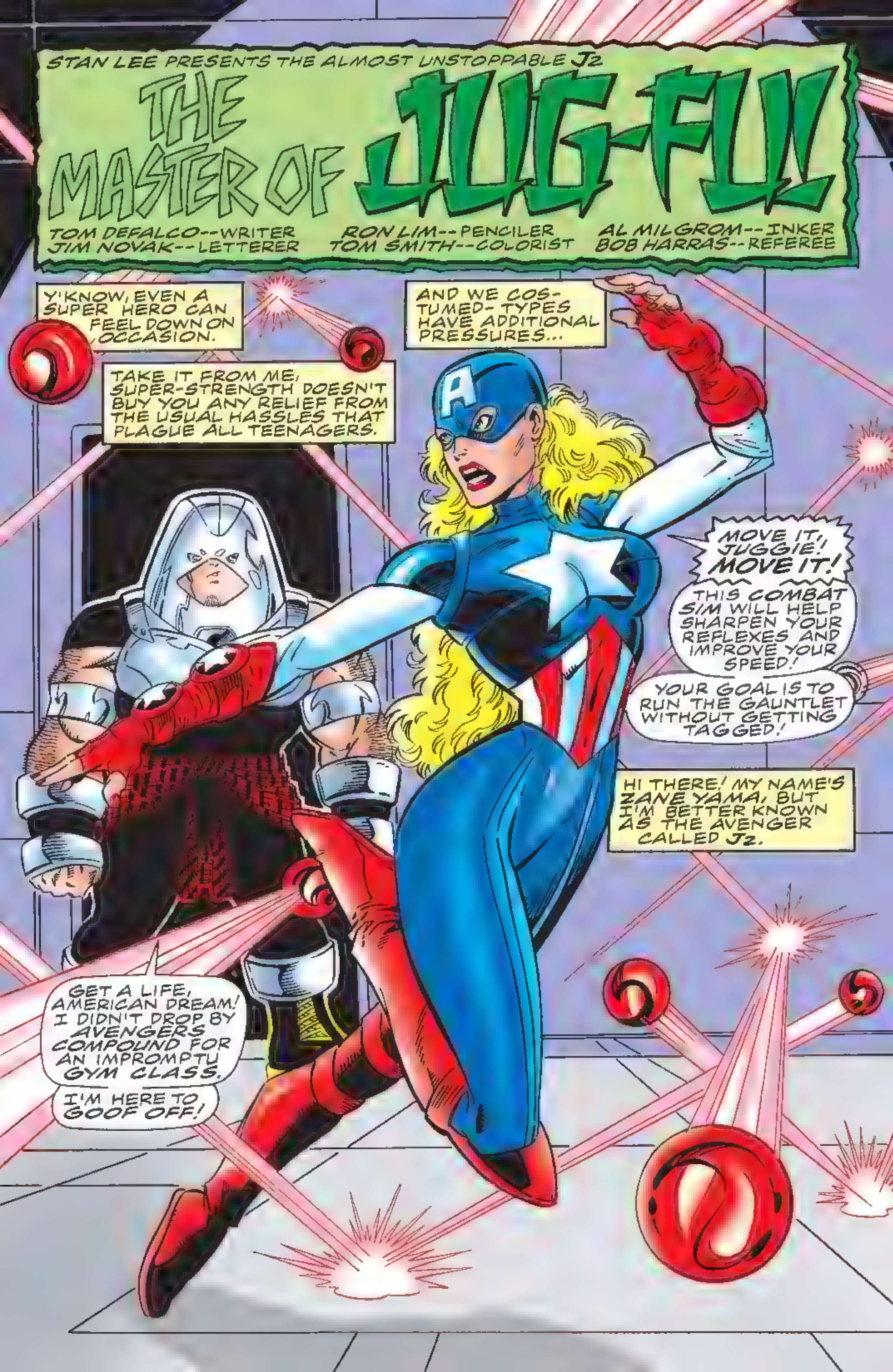
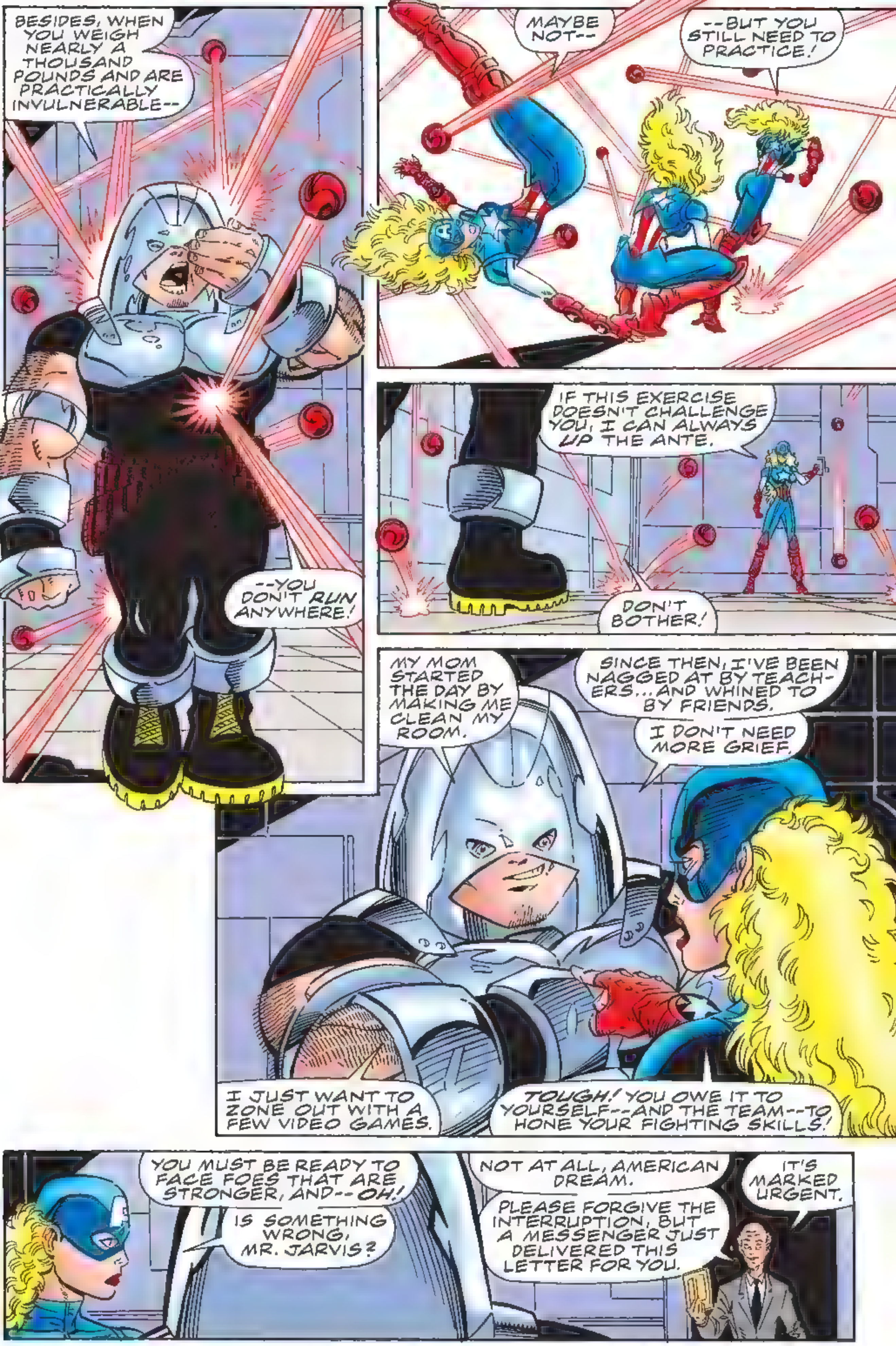
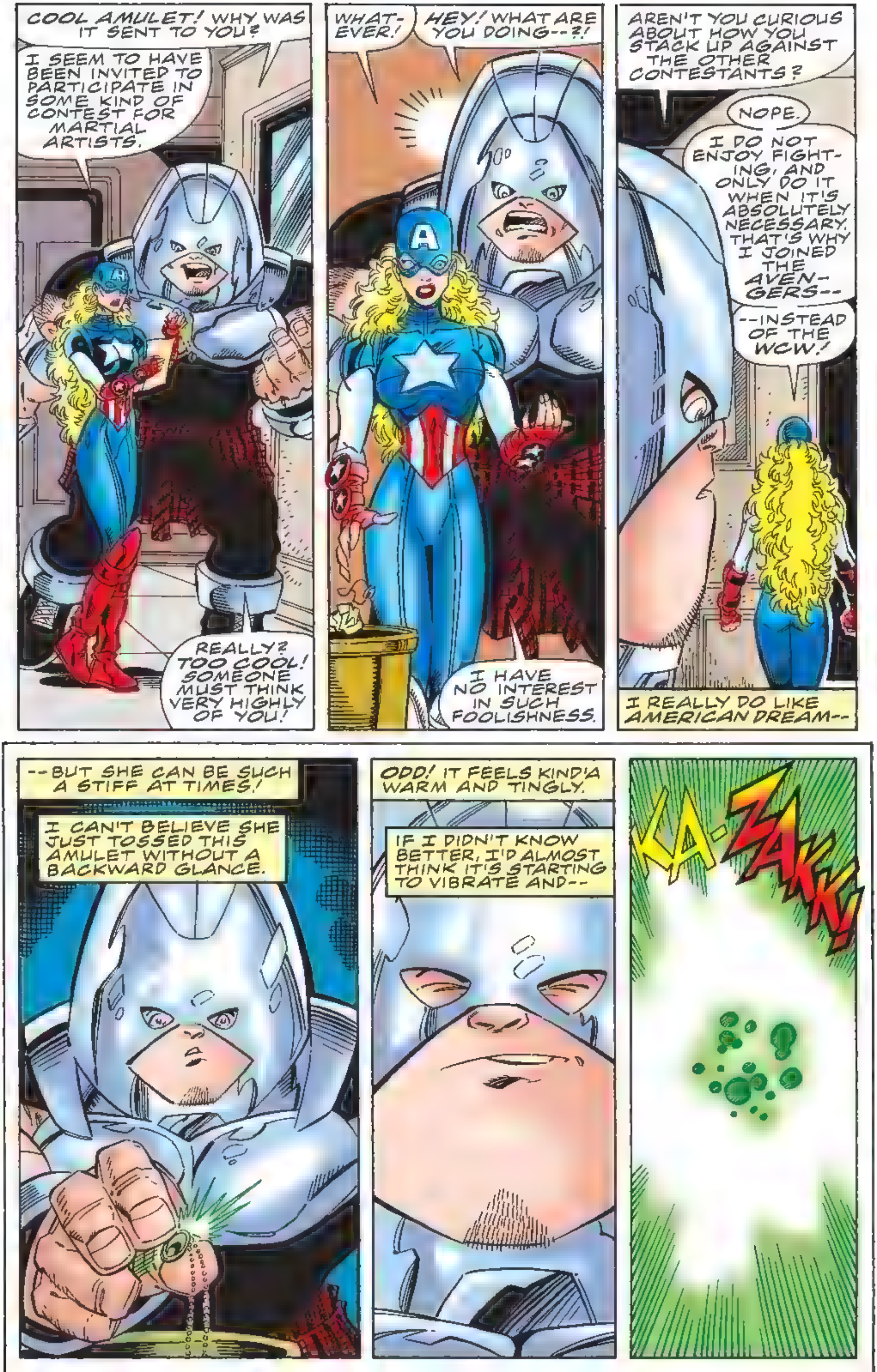
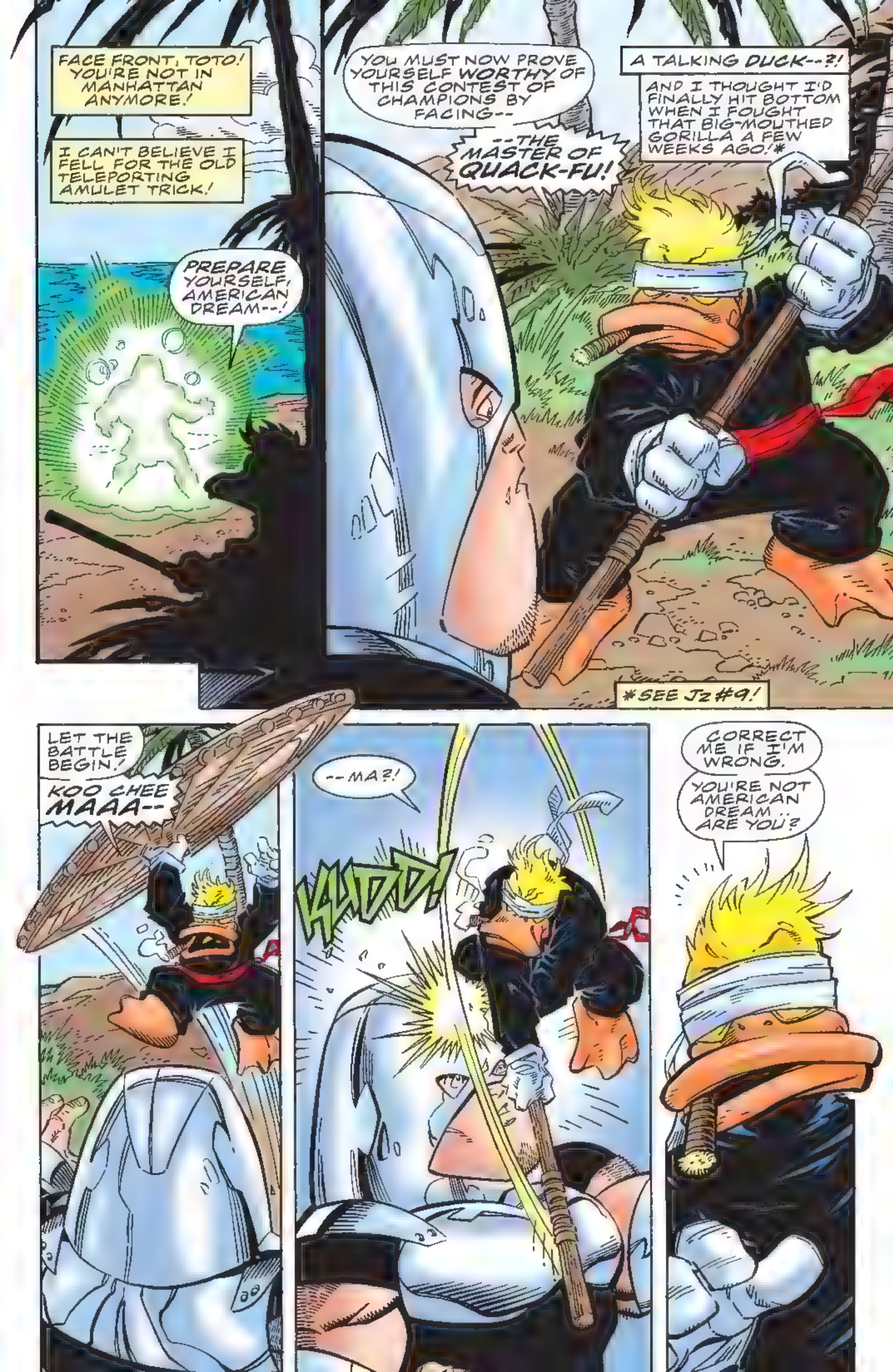
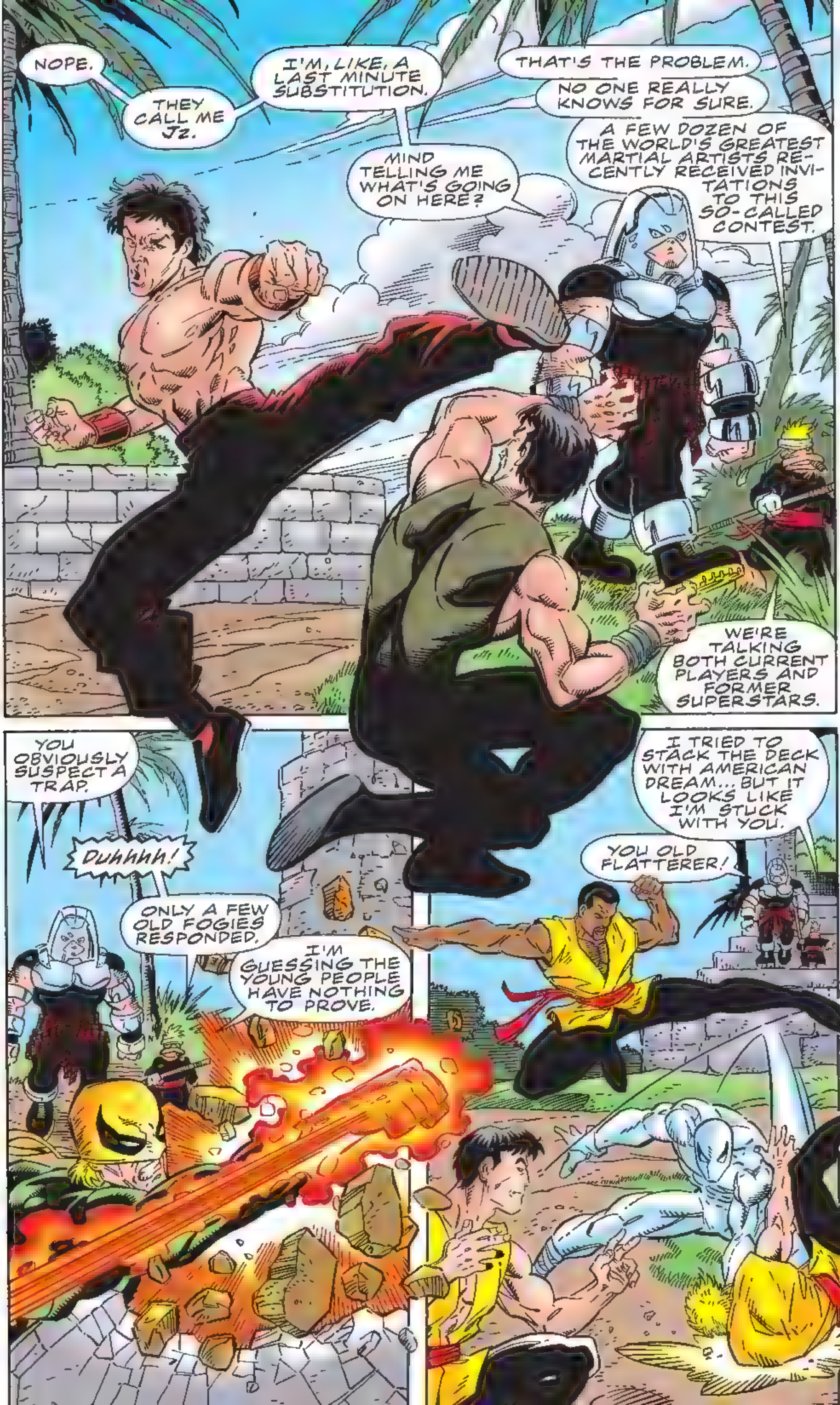
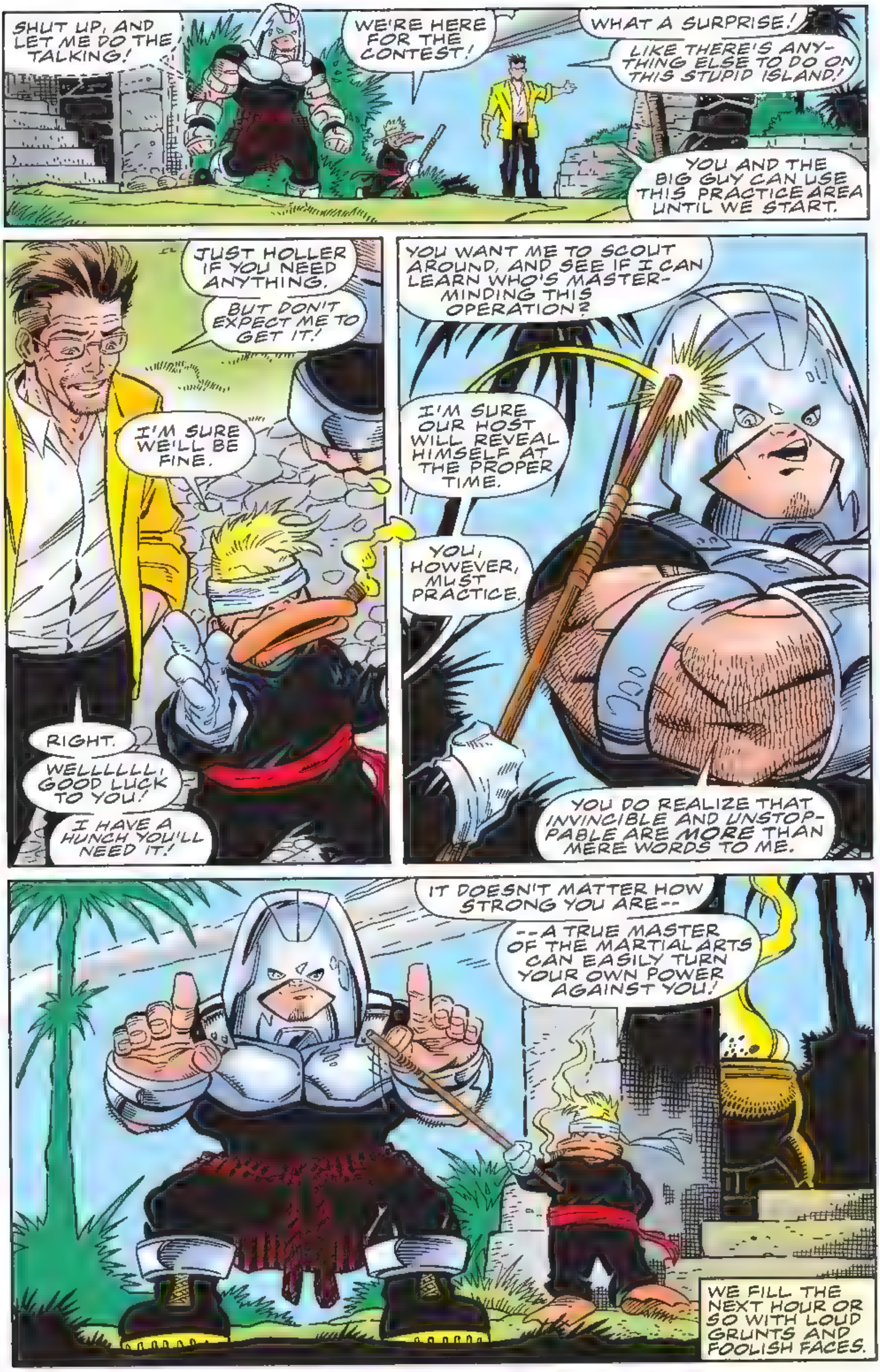

Y'KNOW, EVEN A SUPER HERO CAN FEEL DOWN ON OCCASION.
TAKE IT FROM ME, SUPER-STRENGTH DOESN'T BUY YOU ANY RELIEF FROM THE USUAL HASSLES THAT PLAGUE ALL TEENAGERS.
AND WE COSTUMED-TYPES HAVE ADDITIONAL PRESSURES...
MOVE IT, JUGGIE! MOVE IT!
THIS COMBAT SIM WILL HELP SHARPEN YOUR REFLEXES AND IMPROVE YOUR SPEED!
YOUR GOAL IS TO RUN THE GAUNTLET WITHOUT GETTING TAGGED!
HI THERE! MY NAME'S ZANE YAMA, BUT I'M BETTER KNOWN AS THE AVENGER CALLED J2.
GET A LIFE, AMERICAN DREAM! I DIDN'T DROP BY AVENGERS COMPOUND FOR AN IMPROMPTU GYM CLASS.
I'M HERE TO GOOF OFF!

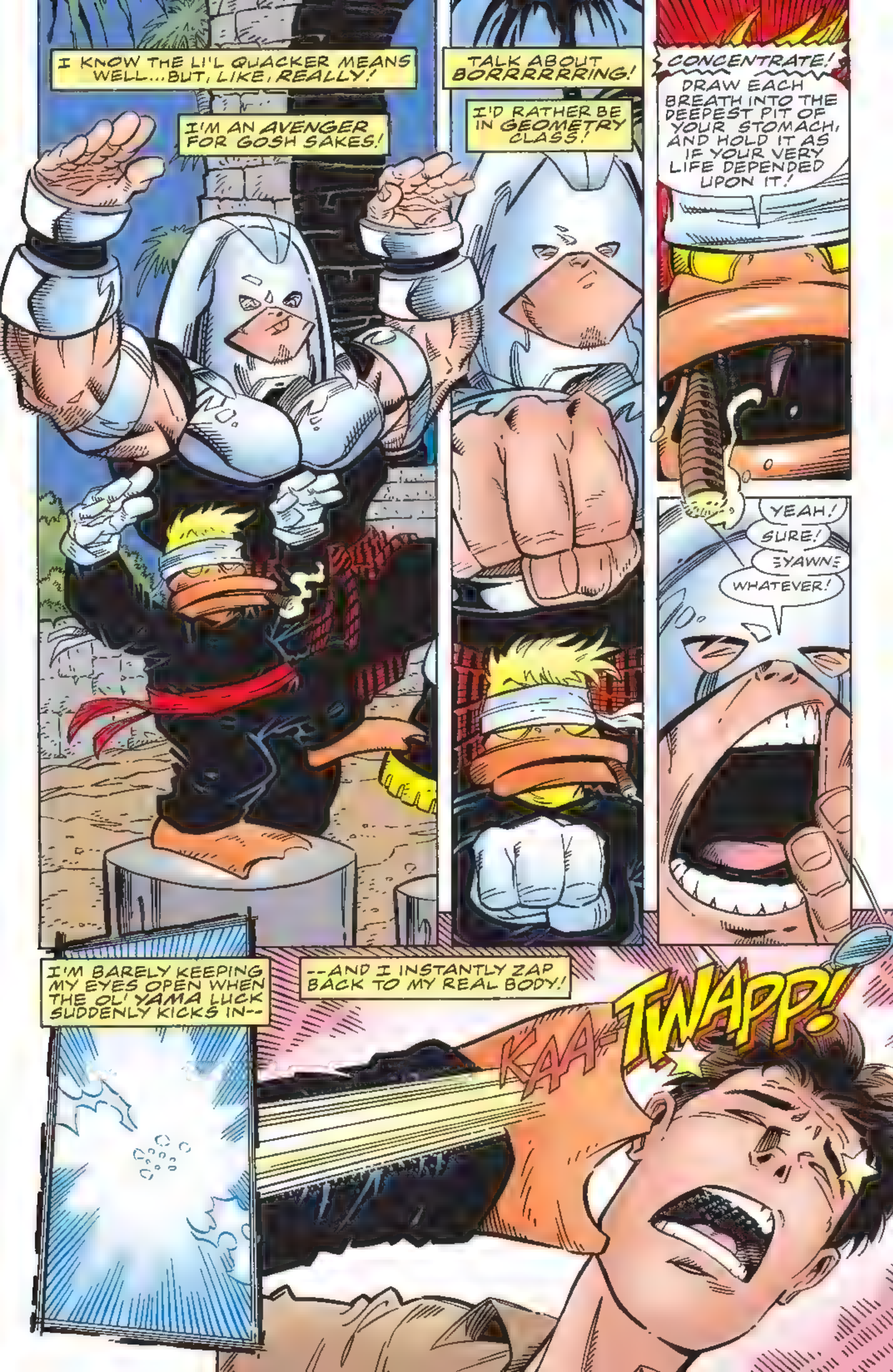

BESIDES, WHEN YOU WEIGH NEARLY A THOUSAND POUNDS AND ARE PRACTICALLY INVULNERABLE--
--YOU DON'T *RUN* ANYWHERE!
MAYBE NOT--
--BUT YOU STILL NEED TO PRACTICE!
IF THIS EXERCISE DOESN'T CHALLENGE YOU, I CAN ALWAYS *UP* THE ANTE.
DON'T BOTHER!
MY MOM STARTED THE DAY BY MAKING ME CLEAN MY ROOM.
SINCE THEN, I'VE BEEN NAGGED AT BY TEACHERS... AND WHINED TO BY FRIENDS.
I DON'T NEED MORE GRIEF.
I JUST WANT TO ZONE OUT WITH A FEW VIDEO GAMES.
TOUGH! YOU OWE IT TO YOURSELF--AND THE TEAM--TO HONE YOUR FIGHTING SKILLS!
YOU MUST BE READY TO FACE FOES THAT ARE STRONGER, AND-- *OH!*
IS SOMETHING WRONG, MR. JARVIS?
NOT AT ALL, AMERICAN DREAM.
PLEASE FORGIVE THE INTERRUPTION, BUT A MESSENGER JUST DELIVERED THIS LETTER FOR YOU.
IT'S MARKED URGENT.

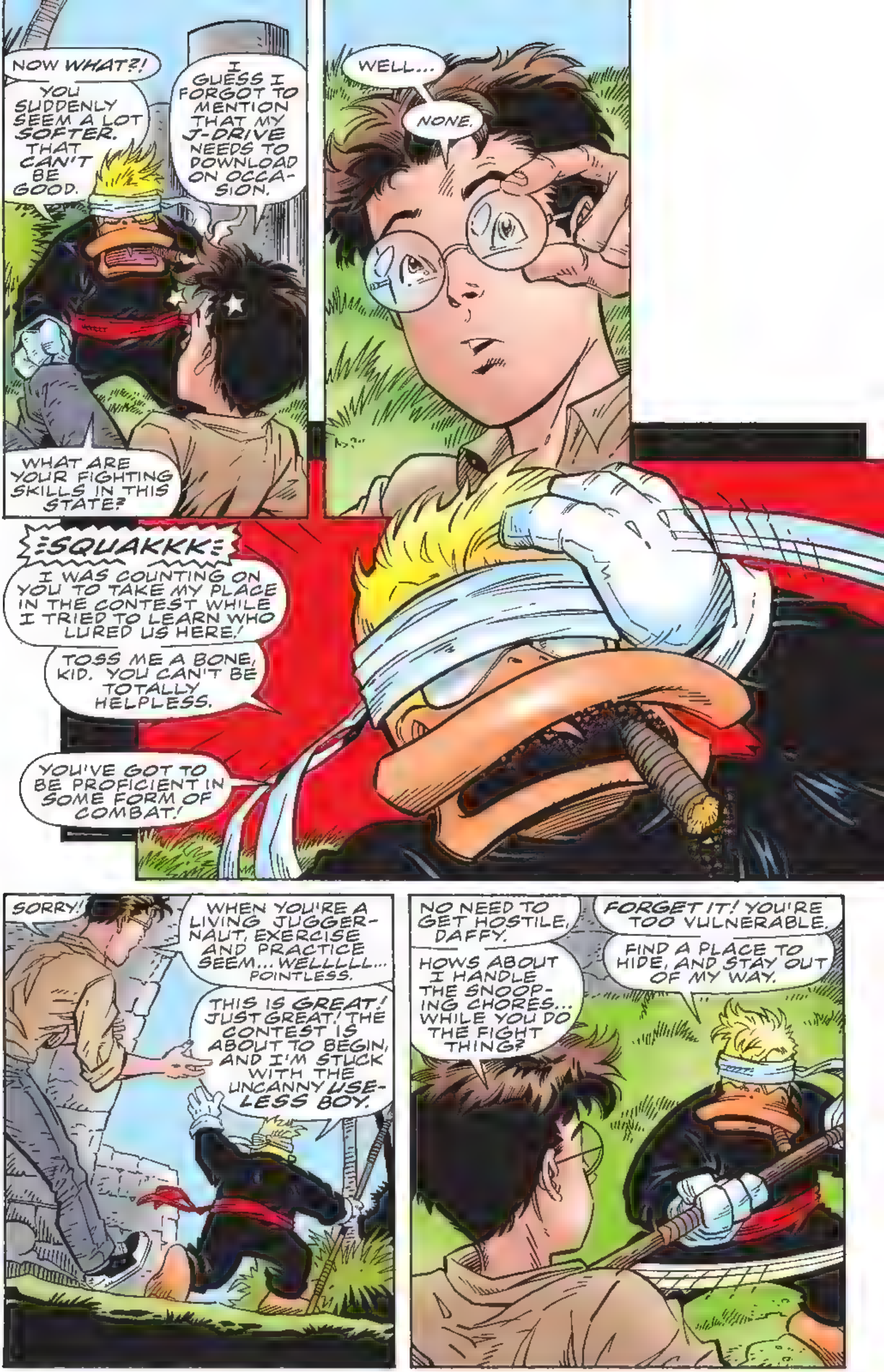

COOL AMULET! WHY WAS IT SENT TO YOU?
I SEEM TO HAVE BEEN INVITED TO PARTICIPATE IN SOME KIND OF CONTEST FOR MARTIAL ARTISTS.
REALLY? TOO COOL! SOMEONE MUST THINK VERY HIGHLY OF YOU!
WHAT-EVER!
HEY! WHAT ARE YOU DOING--?!
I HAVE NO INTEREST IN SUCH FOOLISHNESS.
AREN'T YOU CURIOUS ABOUT HOW YOU STACK UP AGAINST THE OTHER CONTESTANTS?
NOPE.
I DO NOT ENJOY FIGHTING, AND ONLY DO IT WHEN IT'S ABSOLUTELY NECESSARY. THAT'S WHY I JOINED THE AVENGERS--
--INSTEAD OF THE WCW!
I REALLY DO LIKE AMERICAN DREAM--
--BUT SHE CAN BE SUCH A STIFF AT TIMES!
I CAN'T BELIEVE SHE JUST TOSSED THIS AMULET WITHOUT A BACKWARD GLANCE.
ODD! IT FEELS KIND'A WARM AND TINGLY.
IF I DIDN'T KNOW BETTER, I'D ALMOST THINK IT'S STARTING TO VIBRATE AND--
KA-ZAKK!

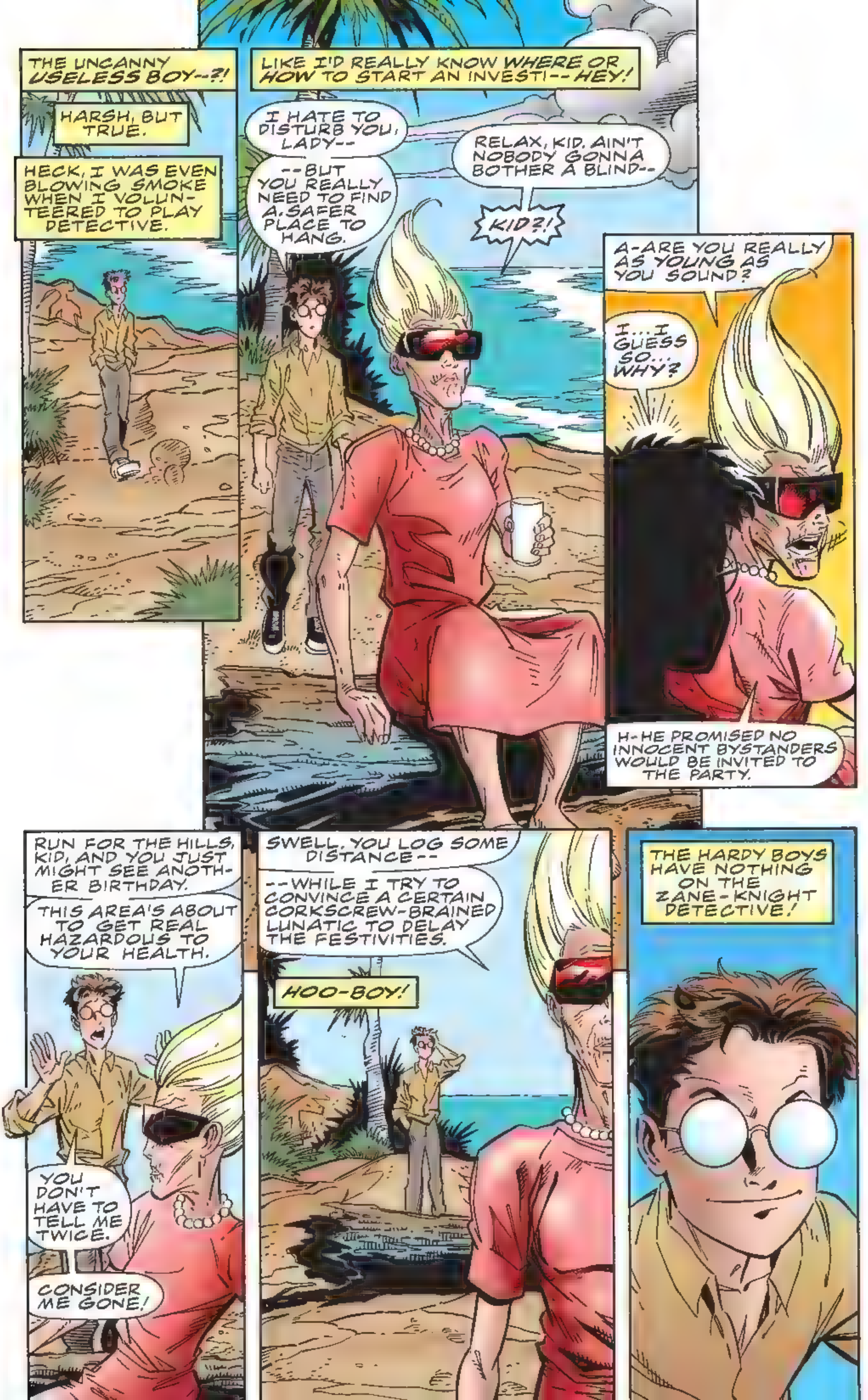

FACE FRONT, TOTO! YOU'RE NOT IN MANHATTAN ANYMORE!
I CAN'T BELIEVE I FELL FOR THE OLD TELEPORTING AMULET TRICK!
PREPARE YOURSELF, AMERICAN DREAM--!
YOU MUST NOW PROVE YOURSELF WORTHY OF THIS CONTEST OF CHAMPIONS BY FACING--
--THE MASTER OF QUACK-FU!
A TALKING DUCK--?!
AND I THOUGHT I'D FINALLY HIT BOTTOM WHEN I FOUGHT THAT BIG-MOUTHED GORILLA A FEW WEEKS AGO!*
*SEE J2 #9!
LET THE BATTLE BEGIN!
KOO CHEE MAAA--
--MA?!
KLUDD!
CORRECT ME IF I'M WRONG.
YOU'RE NOT AMERICAN DREAM... ARE YOU?

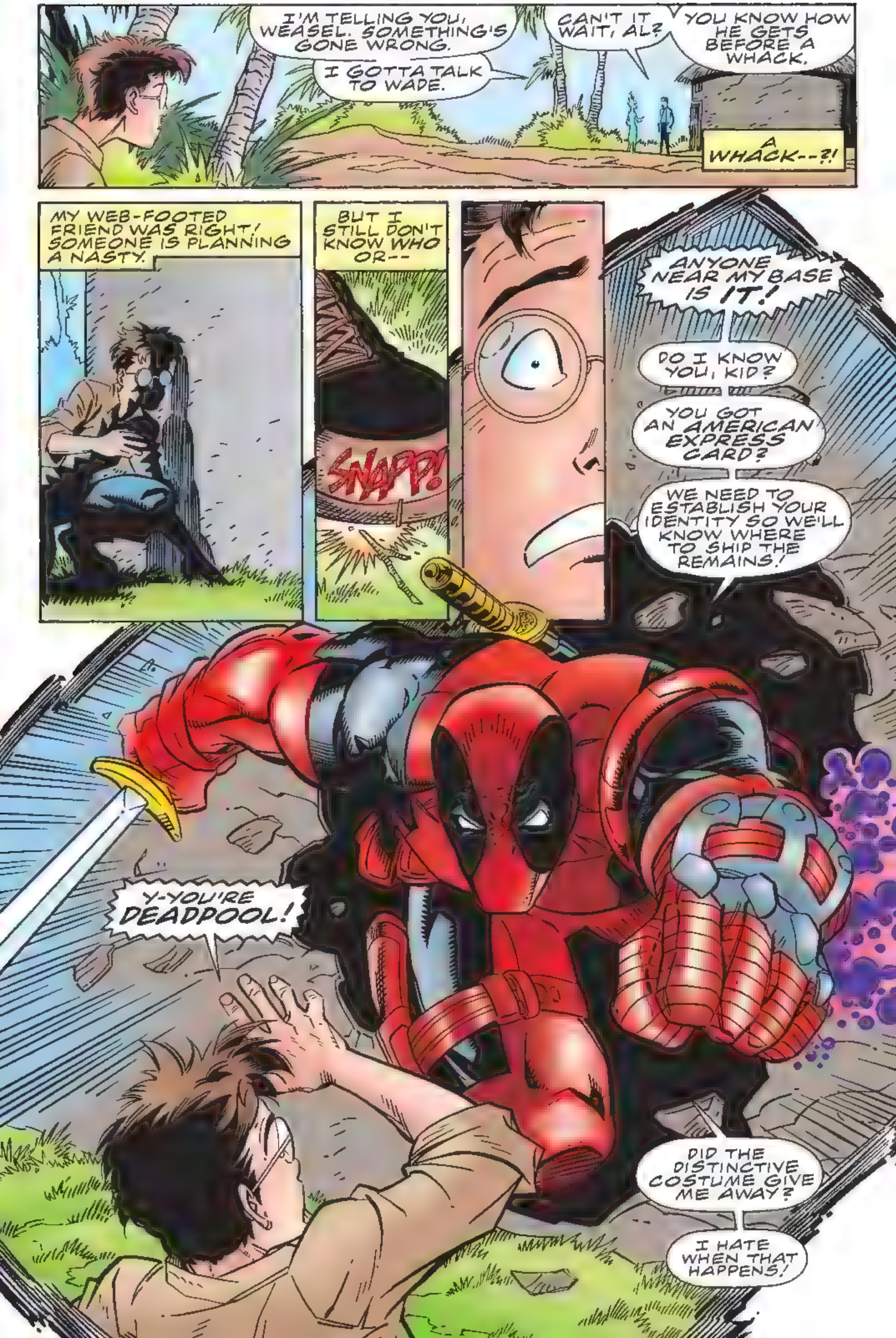

NOPE.
THEY CALL ME JZ.
I'M, LIKE, A LAST MINUTE SUBSTITUTION.
MIND TELLING ME WHAT'S GOING ON HERE?
THAT'S THE PROBLEM.
NO ONE REALLY KNOWS FOR SURE.
A FEW DOZEN OF THE WORLD'S GREATEST MARTIAL ARTISTS RECENTLY RECEIVED INVITATIONS TO THIS SO-CALLED CONTEST.
WE'RE TALKING BOTH CURRENT PLAYERS AND FORMER SUPERSTARS.
YOU OBVIOUSLY SUSPECT A TRAP.
Duhhhh!
ONLY A FEW OLD FOGIES RESPONDED.
I'M GUESSING THE YOUNG PEOPLE HAVE NOTHING TO PROVE.
I TRIED TO STACK THE DECK WITH AMERICAN DREAM... BUT IT LOOKS LIKE I'M STUCK WITH YOU.
YOU OLD FLATTERER!

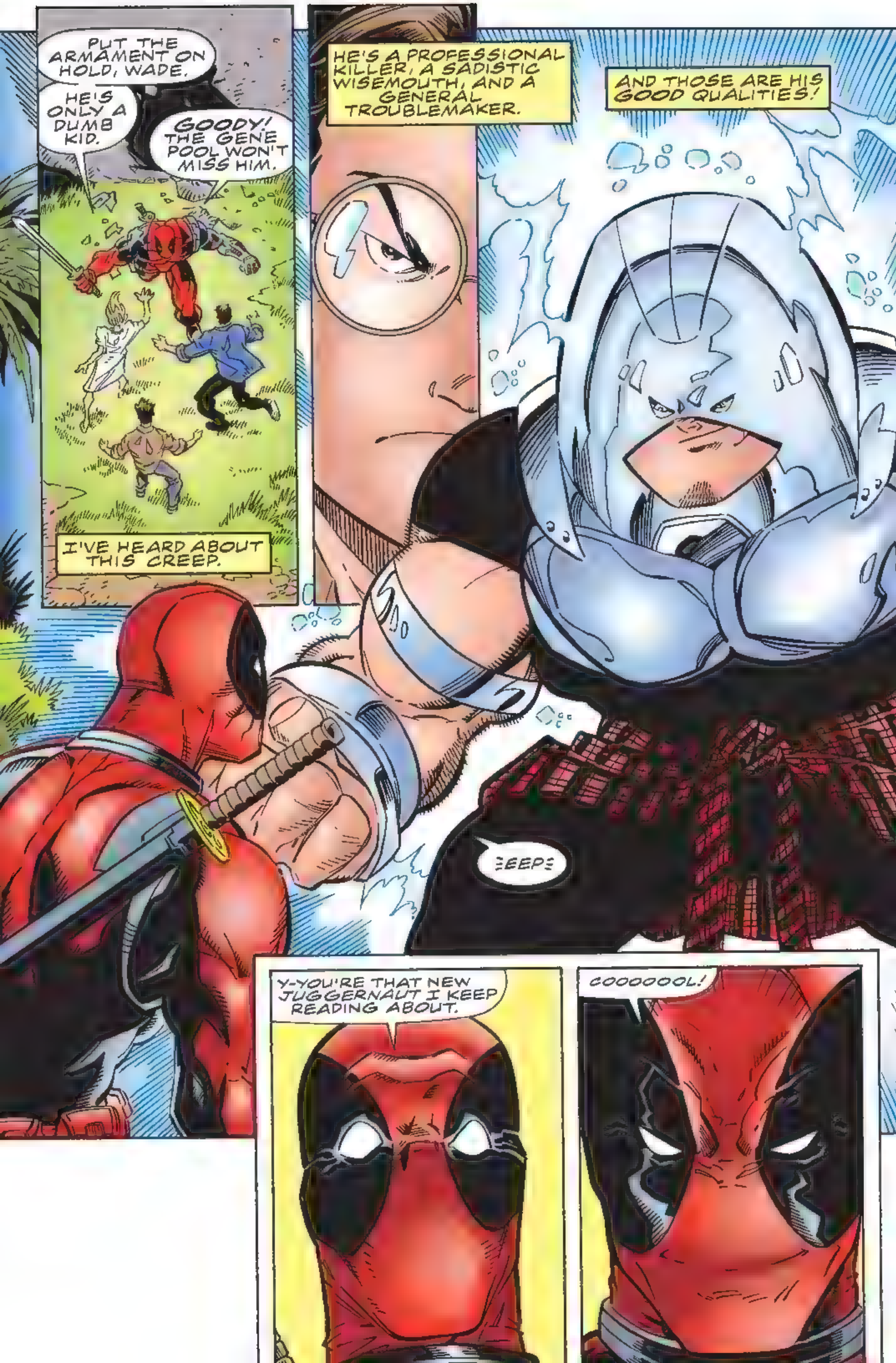

SHUT UP, AND LET ME DO THE TALKING!
WE'RE HERE FOR THE CONTEST!
WHAT A SURPRISE!
LIKE THERE'S ANYTHING ELSE TO DO ON THIS STUPID ISLAND!
YOU AND THE BIG GUY CAN USE THIS PRACTICE AREA UNTIL WE START.
JUST HOLLER IF YOU NEED ANYTHING.
BUT DON'T EXPECT ME TO GET IT!
I'M SURE WE'LL BE FINE.
RIGHT.
WELLLLLLL, GOOD LUCK TO YOU!
I HAVE A HUNCH YOU'LL NEED IT!
YOU WANT ME TO SCOUT AROUND, AND SEE IF I CAN LEARN WHO'S MASTERMINDING THIS OPERATION?
I'M SURE OUR HOST WILL REVEAL HIMSELF AT THE PROPER TIME.
YOU, HOWEVER, MUST PRACTICE.
YOU DO REALIZE THAT INVINCIBLE AND UNSTOPPABLE ARE MORE THAN MERE WORDS TO ME.
IT DOESN'T MATTER HOW STRONG YOU ARE--
--A TRUE MASTER OF THE MARTIAL ARTS CAN EASILY TURN YOUR OWN POWER AGAINST YOU!
WE FILL THE NEXT HOUR OR SO WITH LOUD GRUNTS AND FOOLISH FACES.

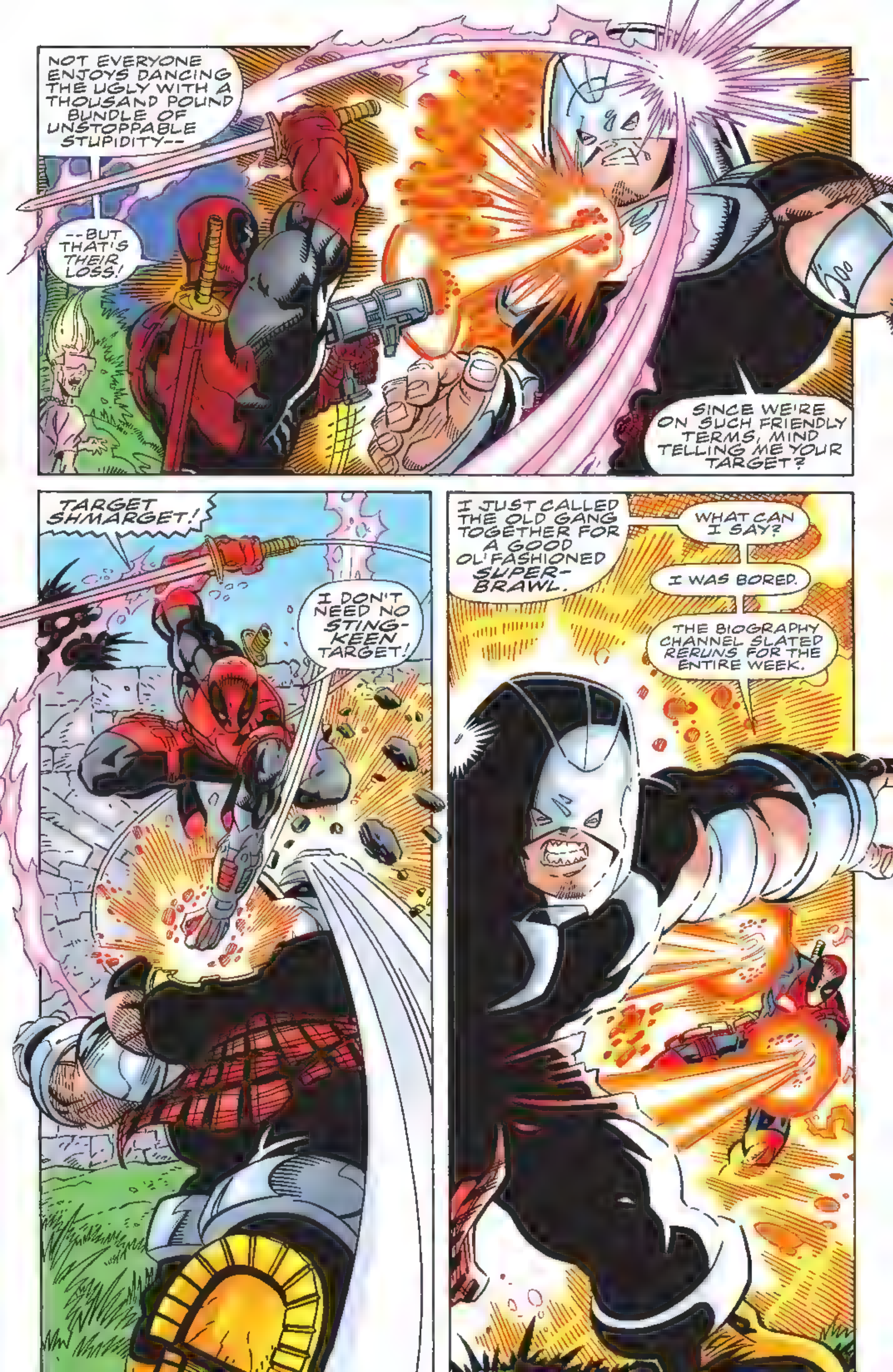

I KNOW THE LI'L QUACKER MEANS WELL... BUT, LIKE, *REALLY!*
I'M AN *AVENGER* FOR GOSH SAKES!
TALK ABOUT *BORRRRRRRING!*
I'D RATHER BE IN *GEOMETRY* CLASS!
CONCENTRATE! DRAW EACH BREATH INTO THE DEEPEST PIT OF YOUR STOMACH, AND HOLD IT AS IF YOUR VERY LIFE DEPENDED UPON IT!
YEAH!
SURE!
=YAWN=
WHATEVER!
I'M BARELY KEEPING MY EYES OPEN WHEN THE OL' *YAMA* LUCK SUDDENLY KICKS IN--
--AND I INSTANTLY ZAP BACK TO MY REAL BODY!
KAA-TWAPP!

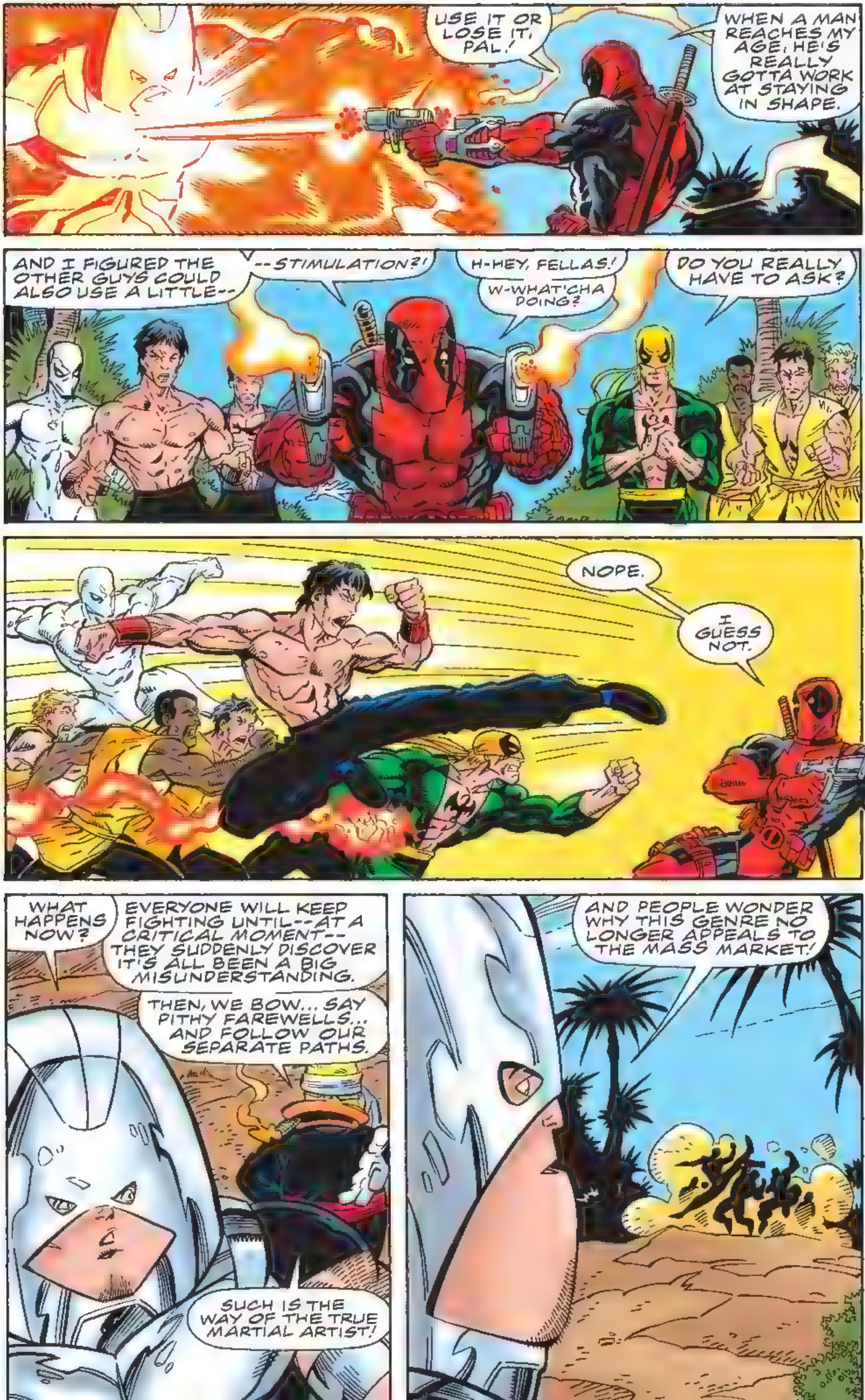

NOW *WHAT?!*
YOU SUDDENLY SEEM A LOT *SOFTER.* THAT *CAN'T* BE GOOD.
I GUESS I FORGOT TO MENTION THAT MY *J-DRIVE* NEEDS TO DOWNLOAD ON OCCASION.
WHAT ARE YOUR FIGHTING SKILLS IN THIS STATE?
WELL...
NONE.
SQUAKKK
I WAS COUNTING ON YOU TO TAKE MY PLACE IN THE CONTEST WHILE I TRIED TO LEARN WHO LURED US HERE!
TOSS ME A BONE, KID. YOU CAN'T BE TOTALLY HELPLESS.
YOU'VE GOT TO BE PROFICIENT IN SOME FORM OF COMBAT!
SORRY!
WHEN YOU'RE A LIVING JUGGERNAUT, EXERCISE AND PRACTICE SEEM... WELLLLL... POINTLESS.
THIS IS *GREAT!* JUST GREAT! THE CONTEST IS ABOUT TO BEGIN, AND I'M STUCK WITH THE UNCANNY *USELESS BOY.*
NO NEED TO GET HOSTILE, DAFFY.
HOWS ABOUT I HANDLE THE SNOOPING CHORES... WHILE YOU DO THE FIGHT THING?
FORGET IT! YOU'RE TOO VULNERABLE.
FIND A PLACE TO HIDE, AND STAY OUT OF MY WAY.

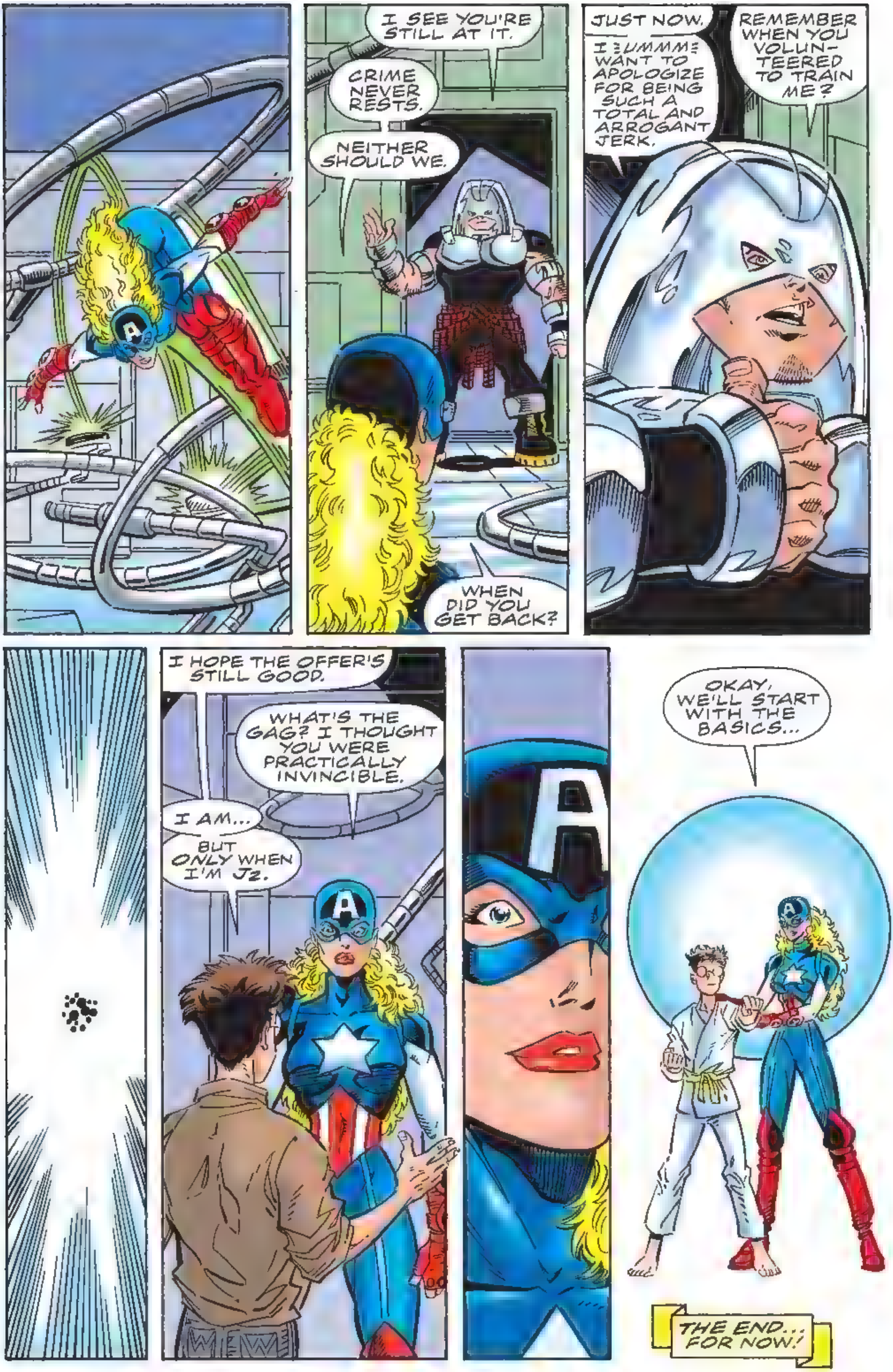

THE UNCANNY *USELESS BOY--?!*
HARSH, BUT TRUE.
HECK, I WAS EVEN BLOWING SMOKE WHEN I VOLUNTEERED TO PLAY DETECTIVE.
LIKE I'D REALLY KNOW *WHERE* OR *HOW* TO START AN INVESTI-- *HEY!*
I HATE TO DISTURB YOU, LADY--
--BUT YOU REALLY NEED TO FIND A SAFER PLACE TO HANG.
RELAX, KID. AIN'T NOBODY GONNA BOTHER A BLIND--
KID?!
A-ARE YOU REALLY AS *YOUNG* AS YOU SOUND?
I...I GUESS SO... *WHY?*
H-HE PROMISED NO INNOCENT BYSTANDERS WOULD BE INVITED TO THE PARTY.
RUN FOR THE HILLS, KID, AND YOU JUST MIGHT SEE ANOTHER BIRTHDAY.
THIS AREA'S ABOUT TO GET REAL HAZARDOUS TO YOUR HEALTH.
YOU DON'T HAVE TO TELL ME TWICE.
CONSIDER ME GONE!
SWELL. YOU LOG SOME DISTANCE--
--WHILE I TRY TO CONVINCE A CERTAIN CORKSCREW-BRAINED LUNATIC TO DELAY THE FESTIVITIES.
HOO-BOY!
THE HARDY BOYS HAVE NOTHING ON THE ZANE-KNIGHT DETECTIVE!


I'M TELLING YOU, WEASEL. SOMETHING'S GONE WRONG.
I GOTTA TALK TO WADE.
CAN'T IT WAIT, AL?
YOU KNOW HOW HE GETS BEFORE A WHACK.
A WHACK--?!
MY WEB-FOOTED FRIEND WAS RIGHT! SOMEONE IS PLANNING A NASTY.
BUT I STILL DON'T KNOW WHO OR--
SNAPP!
ANYONE NEAR MY BASE IS IT!
DO I KNOW YOU, KID?
YOU GOT AN AMERICAN EXPRESS CARD?
WE NEED TO ESTABLISH YOUR IDENTITY SO WE'LL KNOW WHERE TO SHIP THE REMAINS!
Y-YOU'RE DEADPOOL!
DID THE DISTINCTIVE COSTUME GIVE ME AWAY?
I HATE WHEN THAT HAPPENS!


PUT THE ARMAMENT ON HOLD, WADE.
HE'S ONLY A DUMB KID.
GOODY! THE GENE POOL WON'T MISS HIM.
I'VE HEARD ABOUT THIS CREEP.
HE'S A PROFESSIONAL KILLER, A SADISTIC WISEMOUTH, AND A GENERAL TROUBLEMAKER.
AND THOSE ARE HIS GOOD QUALITIES!
EEP
Y-YOU'RE THAT NEW JUGGERNAUT I KEEP READING ABOUT.
COOOOOOL!


NOT EVERYONE ENJOYS DANCING THE UGLY WITH A THOUSAND POUND BUNDLE OF UNSTOPPABLE STUPIDITY--
--BUT THAT'S THEIR LOSS!
SINCE WE'RE ON SUCH FRIENDLY TERMS, MIND TELLING ME YOUR TARGET?
TARGET SHMARGET!
I DON'T NEED NO *STING-KEEN* TARGET!
I JUST CALLED THE OLD GANG TOGETHER FOR A GOOD OL' FASHIONED *SUPER-BRAWL.*
WHAT CAN I SAY?
I WAS BORED.
THE BIOGRAPHY CHANNEL SLATED *RERUNS* FOR THE ENTIRE WEEK.


USE IT OR LOSE IT, PAL!
WHEN A MAN REACHES MY AGE, HE'S REALLY GOTTA WORK AT STAYING IN SHAPE.
AND I FIGURED THE OTHER GUYS COULD ALSO USE A LITTLE--
--STIMULATION?!
H-HEY, FELLAS!
W-WHAT'CHA DOING?
DO YOU REALLY HAVE TO ASK?
NOPE.
I GUESS NOT.
WHAT HAPPENS NOW?
EVERYONE WILL KEEP FIGHTING UNTIL--AT A CRITICAL MOMENT--THEY SUDDENLY DISCOVER IT'S ALL BEEN A BIG MISUNDERSTANDING.
THEN, WE BOW... SAY PITHY FAREWELLS... AND FOLLOW OUR SEPARATE PATHS.
SUCH IS THE WAY OF THE TRUE MARTIAL ARTIST!
AND PEOPLE WONDER WHY THIS GENRE NO LONGER APPEALS TO THE MASS MARKET!


I SEE YOU'RE STILL AT IT.
CRIME NEVER RESTS.
NEITHER SHOULD WE.
WHEN DID YOU GET BACK?
JUST NOW.
I ≡UMMM≡ WANT TO APOLOGIZE FOR BEING SUCH A TOTAL AND ARROGANT JERK.
REMEMBER WHEN YOU VOLUNTEERED TO TRAIN ME?
I HOPE THE OFFER'S STILL GOOD.
WHAT'S THE GAG? I THOUGHT YOU WERE PRACTICALLY INVINCIBLE.
I AM...
BUT ONLY WHEN I'M J2.
OKAY, WE'LL START WITH THE BASICS...
THE END... FOR NOW!

EXILES
MARVEL
5
WINICK
CALAFIORE
McKENNA

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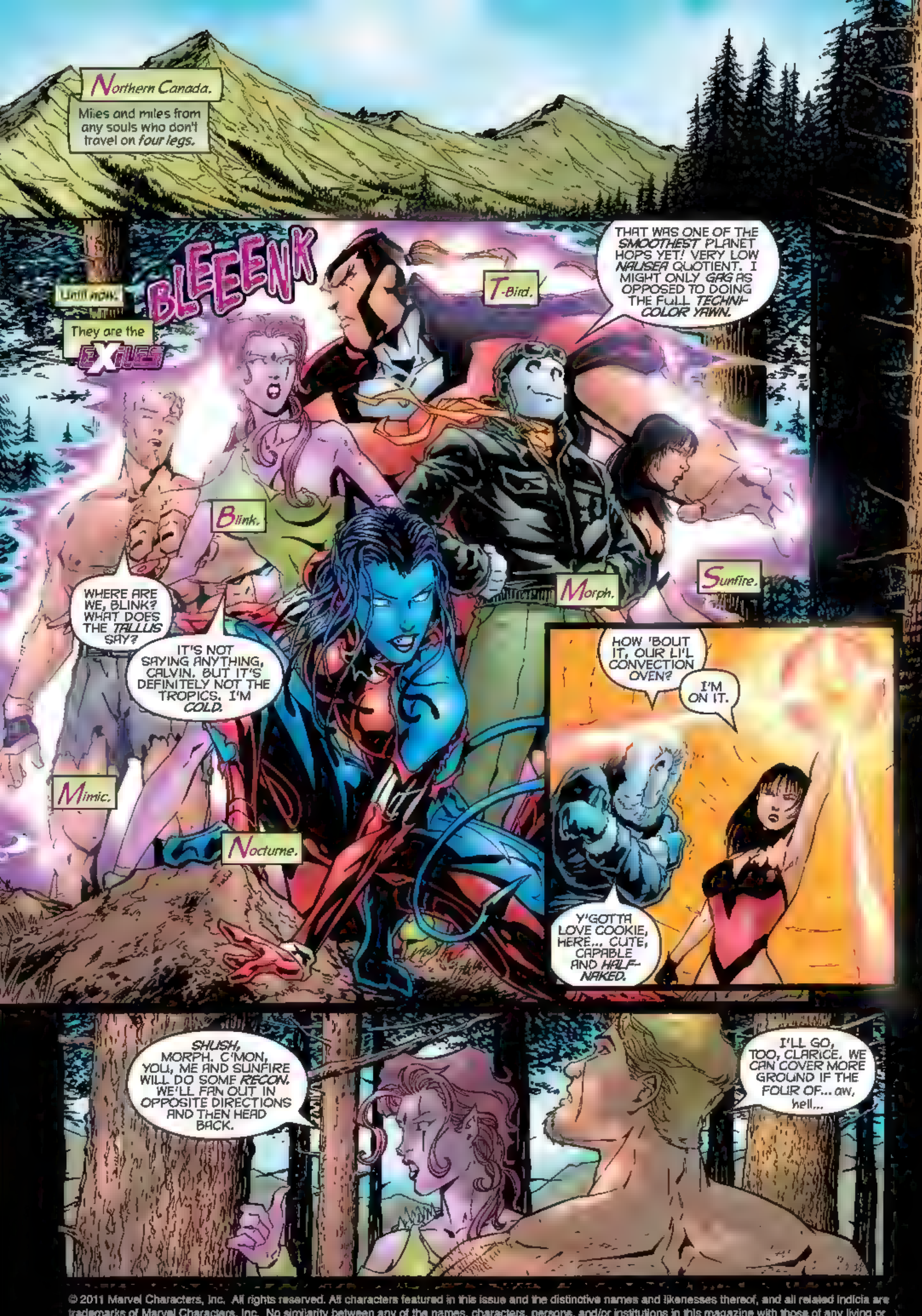
Northern Canada.
Miles and miles from any souls who don't travel on *four legs.*
Until now.
They are the EXILES
BLEEEENK
T-Bird.
THAT WAS ONE OF THE *SMOOTHEST* PLANET HOPS YET! VERY LOW *NAUSEA* QUOTIENT. I MIGHT ONLY *GAG* AS OPPOSED TO DOING THE FULL *TECHNI-COLOR YAWN.*
Blink.
Morph.
Sunfire.
WHERE ARE WE, BLINK? WHAT DOES THE *TALLUS* SAY?
IT'S NOT SAYING ANYTHING, CALVIN. BUT IT'S DEFINITELY NOT THE TROPICS. I'M *COLD.*
Mimic.
Nocturne.
HOW 'BOUT IT, OUR LI'L CONVECTION OVEN?
I'M ON IT.
Y'GOTTA LOVE COOKIE, HERE... CUTE, CAPABLE AND *HALF-NAKED.*
SHUSH, MORPH. C'MON, YOU, ME AND SUNFIRE WILL DO SOME *RECON.* WE'LL FAN OUT IN OPPOSITE DIRECTIONS AND THEN HEAD BACK.
I'LL GO, TOO, CLARICE. WE CAN COVER MORE GROUND IF THE FOUR OF... aw, hell...

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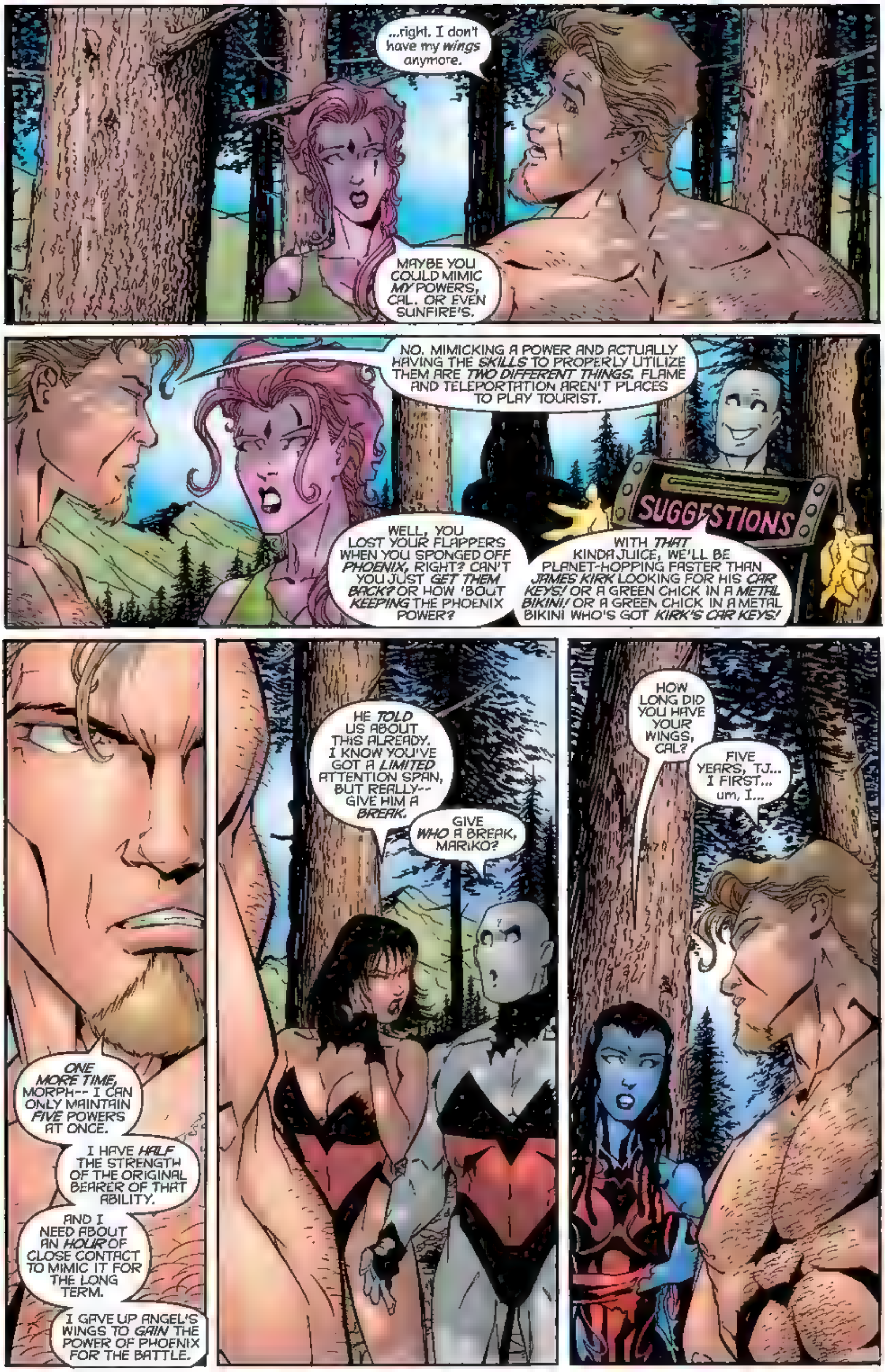
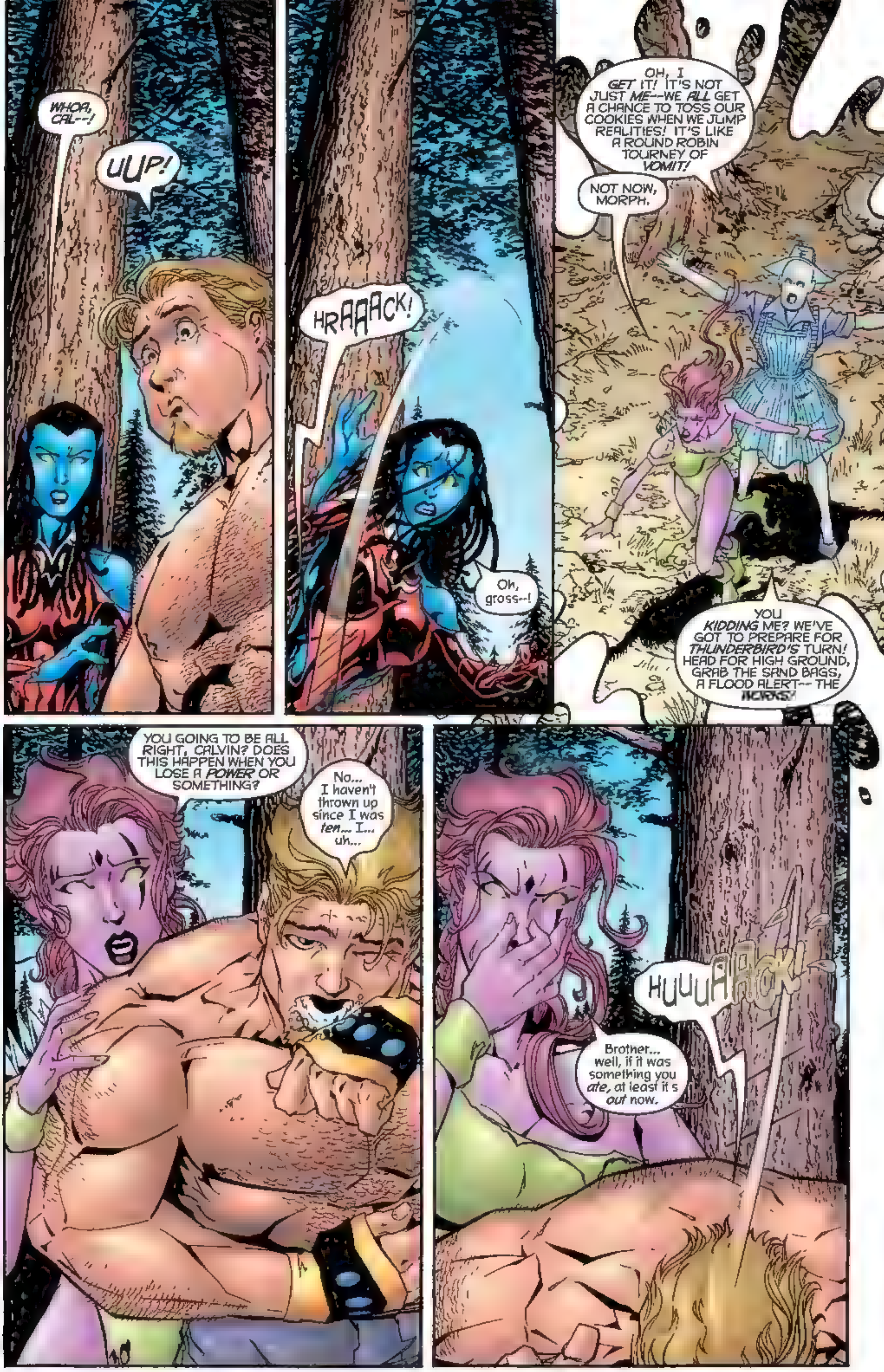
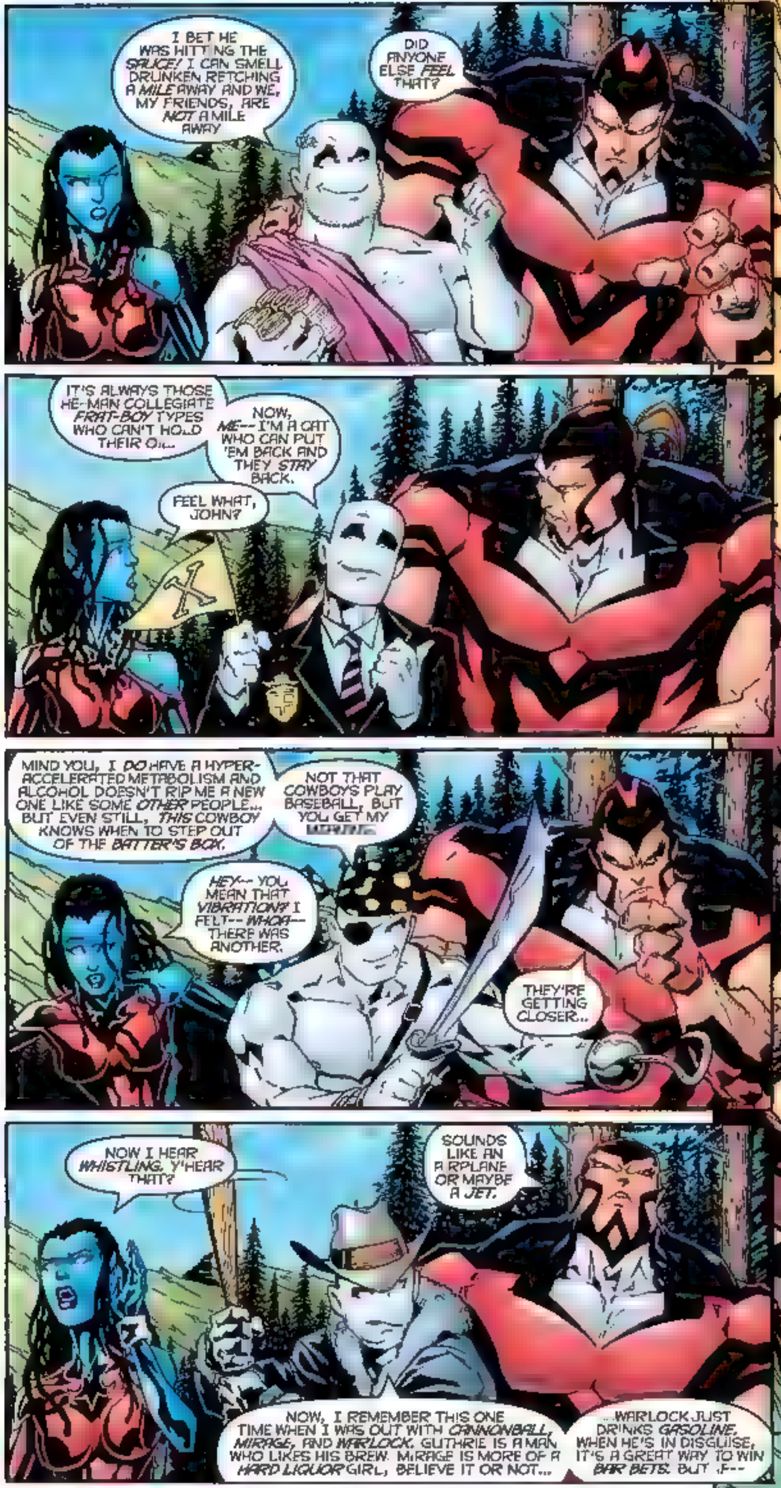
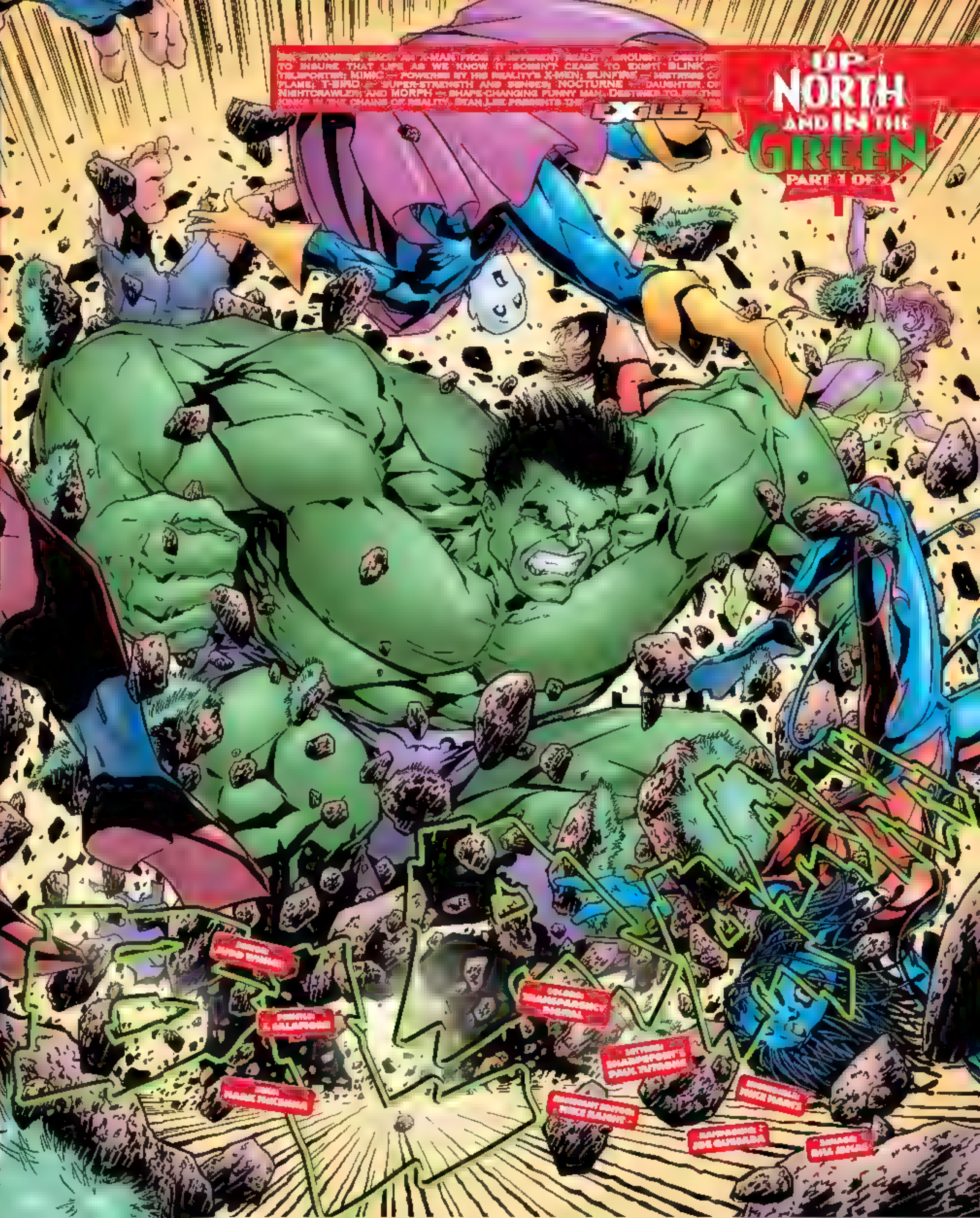
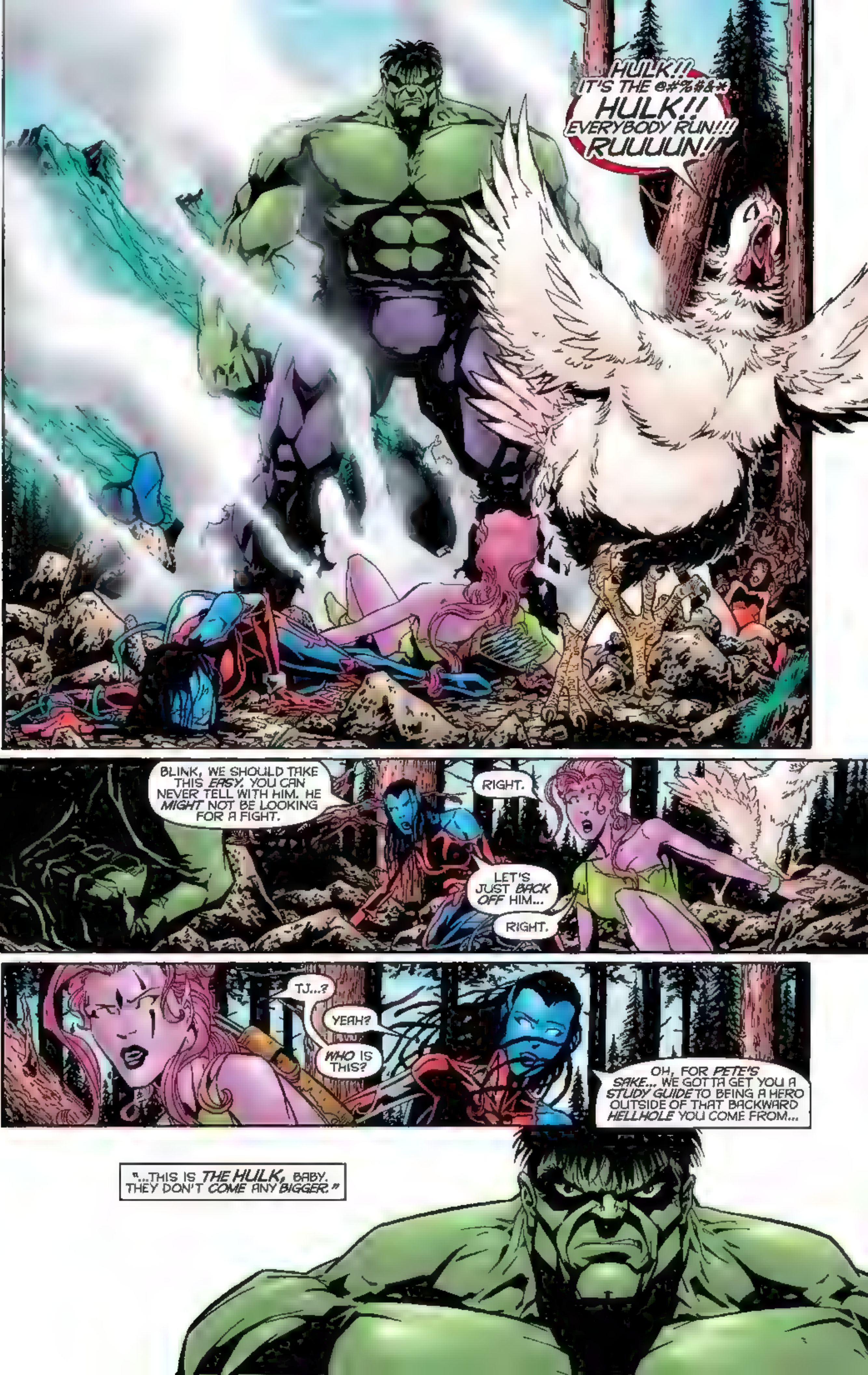
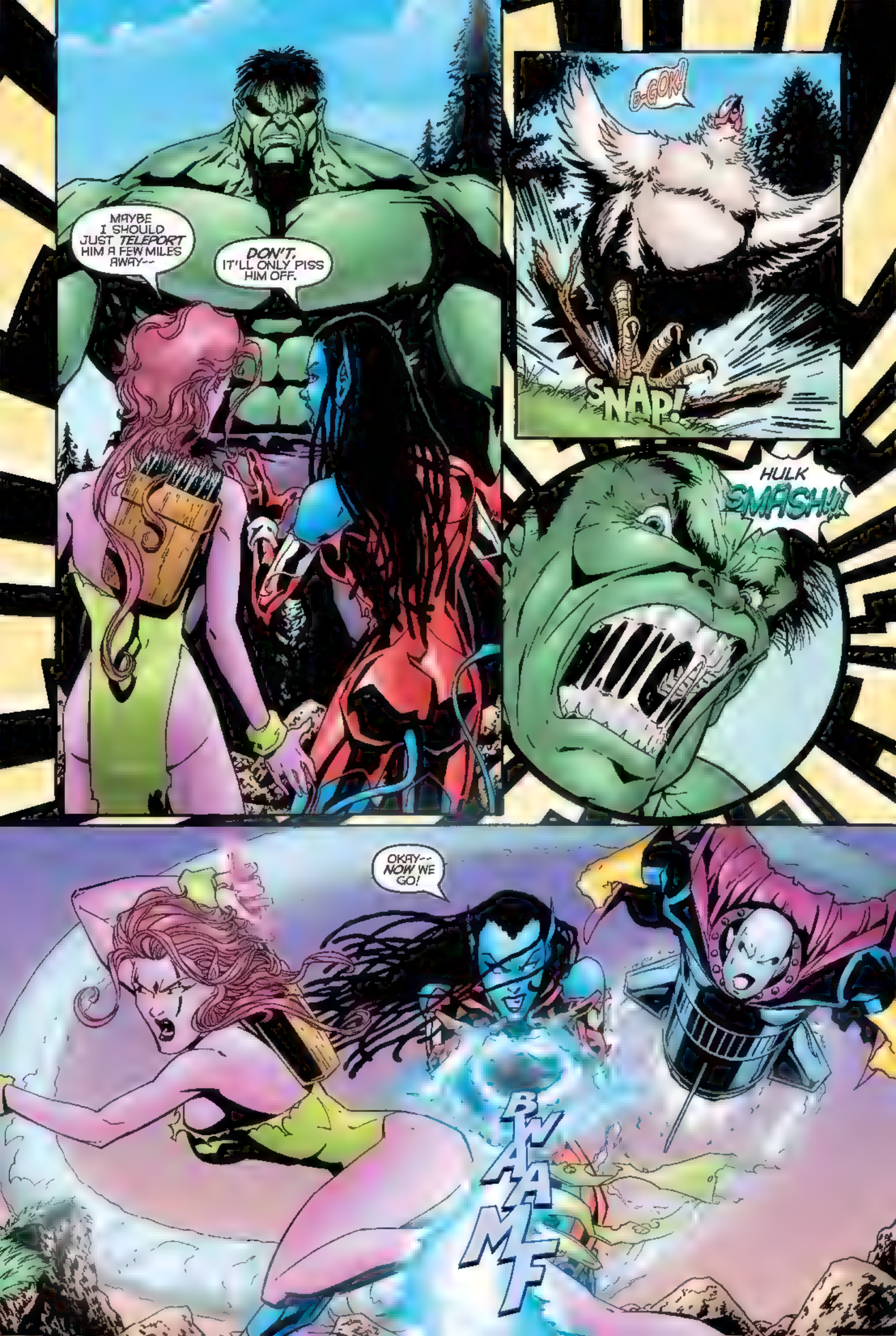

...right. I don't have my *wings* anymore.
MAYBE YOU COULD MIMIC *MY* POWERS, CAL. OR EVEN SUNFIRE'S.
NO. MIMICKING A POWER AND ACTUALLY HAVING THE *SKILLS* TO PROPERLY UTILIZE THEM ARE *TWO DIFFERENT THINGS.* FLAME AND TELEPORTATION AREN'T PLACES TO PLAY TOURIST.
SUGGESTIONS
WELL, YOU LOST YOUR FLAPPERS WHEN YOU SPONGED OFF *PHOENIX,* RIGHT? CAN'T YOU JUST *GET THEM BACK?* OR HOW 'BOUT *KEEPING* THE PHOENIX POWER?
WITH *THAT* KINDA JUICE, WE'LL BE PLANET-HOPPING FASTER THAN *JAMES KIRK* LOOKING FOR HIS *CAR KEYS!* OR A GREEN CHICK IN A *METAL BIKINI!* OR A GREEN CHICK IN A METAL BIKINI WHO'S GOT *KIRK'S CAR KEYS!*
ONE MORE TIME, MORPH-- I CAN ONLY MAINTAIN *FIVE* POWERS AT ONCE.
I HAVE *HALF* THE STRENGTH OF THE ORIGINAL BEARER OF THAT ABILITY.
AND I NEED ABOUT AN *HOUR* OF CLOSE CONTACT TO MIMIC IT FOR THE LONG TERM.
I GAVE UP ANGEL'S WINGS TO *GAIN* THE POWER OF PHOENIX FOR THE BATTLE.
HE *TOLD* US ABOUT THIS ALREADY. I KNOW YOU'VE GOT A *LIMITED* ATTENTION SPAN, BUT REALLY-- GIVE HIM A *BREAK.*
GIVE *WHO* A BREAK, MARIKO?
HOW LONG DID YOU HAVE YOUR WINGS, CAL?
FIVE YEARS, TJ... I FIRST... um, I...

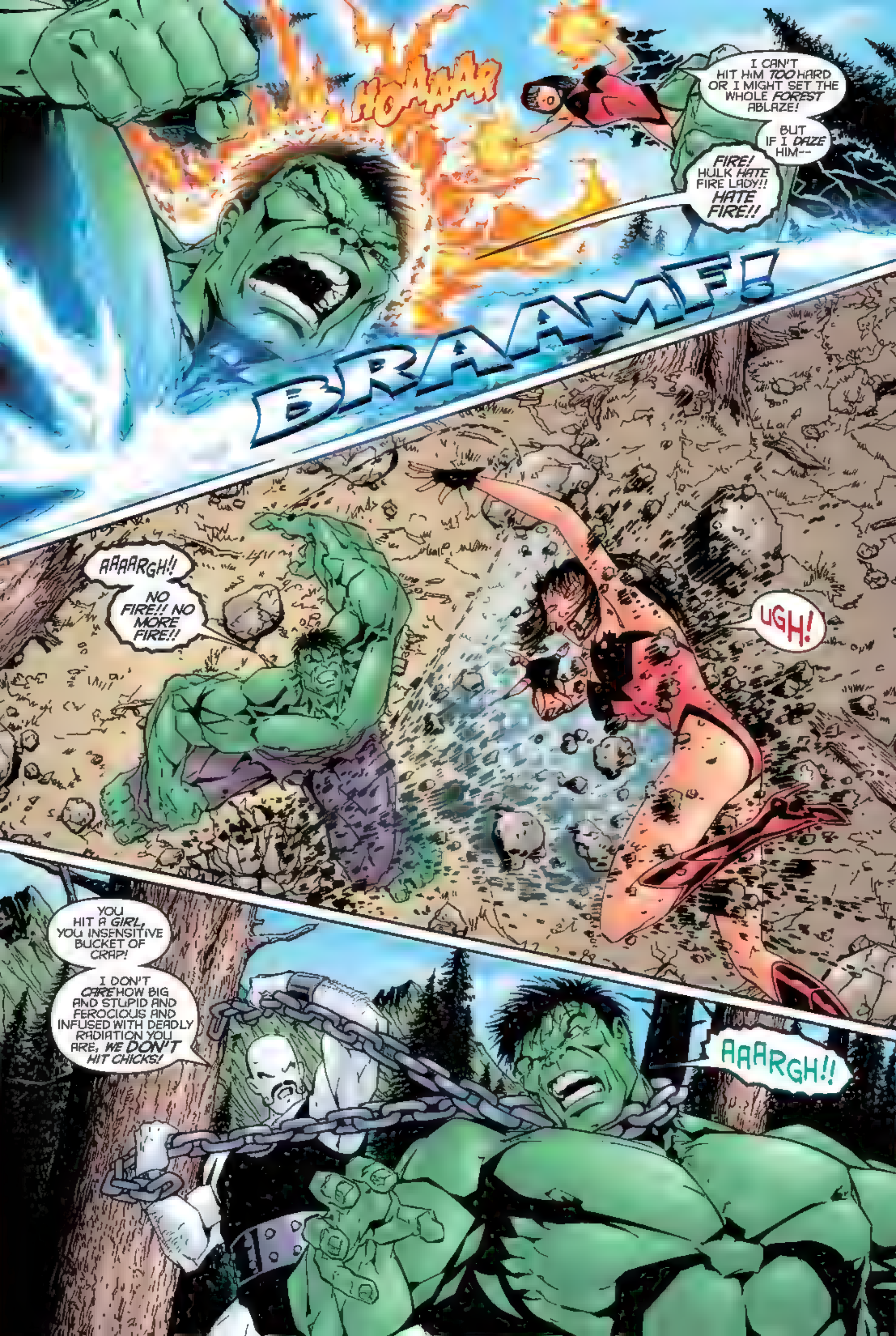

WHOA, CAL--!
UUP!
HRAAAACK!
Oh, gross--!
OH, I *GET* IT! IT'S NOT JUST *ME*--WE *ALL* GET A CHANCE TO TOSS OUR COOKIES WHEN WE JUMP REALITIES! IT'S LIKE A ROUND ROBIN TOURNEY OF *VOMIT!*
NOT NOW, MORPH.
YOU *KIDDING* ME? WE'VE GOT TO PREPARE FOR *THUNDERBIRD'S* TURN! HEAD FOR HIGH GROUND, GRAB THE SAND BAGS, A FLOOD ALERT-- THE *WORKS!*
YOU GOING TO BE ALL RIGHT, CALVIN? DOES THIS HAPPEN WHEN YOU LOSE A *POWER* OR SOMETHING?
No... I haven't thrown up since I was *ten*... I... uh...
HUUUAAACK!
Brother... well, if it was something you *ate*, at least it's *out* now.

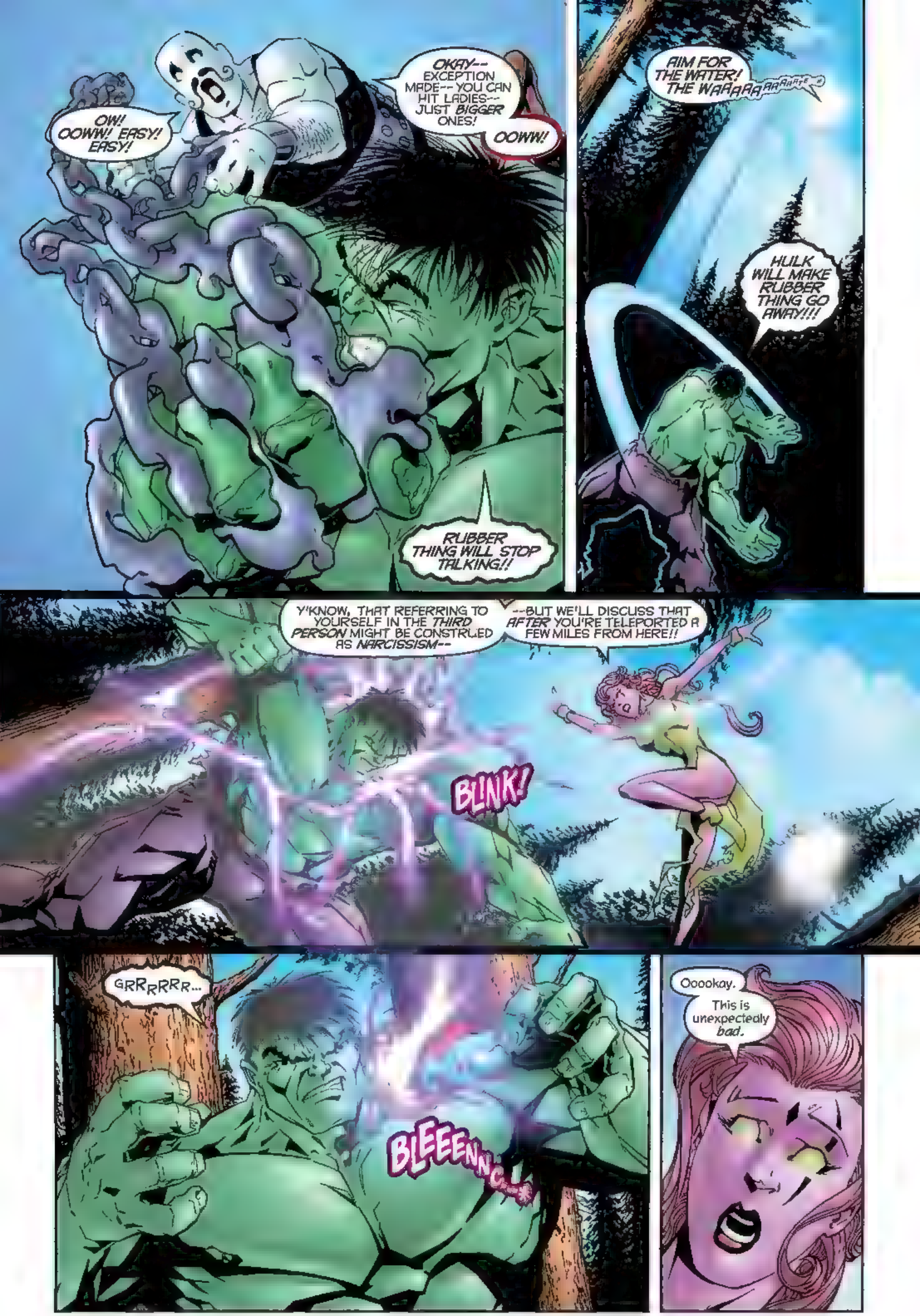

I BET HE WAS HITTING THE SAUCE! I CAN SMELL DRUNKEN RETCHING A MILE AWAY AND WE, MY FRIENDS, ARE NOT A MILE AWAY.
DID ANYONE ELSE FEEL THAT?
IT'S ALWAYS THOSE HE-MAN COLLEGIATE FRAT-BOY TYPES WHO CAN'T HOLD THEIR OIL...
NOW, ME-- I'M A CAT WHO CAN PUT 'EM BACK AND THEY STAY BACK.
FEEL WHAT, JOHN?
MIND YOU, I DO HAVE A HYPER-ACCELERATED METABOLISM AND ALCOHOL DOESN'T RIP ME A NEW ONE LIKE SOME OTHER PEOPLE... BUT EVEN STILL, THIS COWBOY KNOWS WHEN TO STEP OUT OF THE BATTER'S BOX.
NOT THAT COWBOYS PLAY BASEBALL, BUT YOU GET MY MEANING.
HEY-- YOU MEAN THAT VIBRATION? I FELT-- WHOA-- THERE WAS ANOTHER.
THEY'RE GETTING CLOSER...
NOW I HEAR WHISTLING. Y'HEAR THAT?
SOUNDS LIKE AN AIRPLANE OR MAYBE A JET.
NOW, I REMEMBER THIS ONE TIME WHEN I WAS OUT WITH CANNONBALL, MIRAGE, AND WARLOCK. GUTHRIE IS A MAN WHO LIKES HIS BREW. MIRAGE IS MORE OF A HARD LIQUOR GIRL, BELIEVE IT OR NOT...
...WARLOCK JUST DRINKS GASOLINE. WHEN HE'S IN DISGUISE, IT'S A GREAT WAY TO WIN BAR BETS. BUT I--

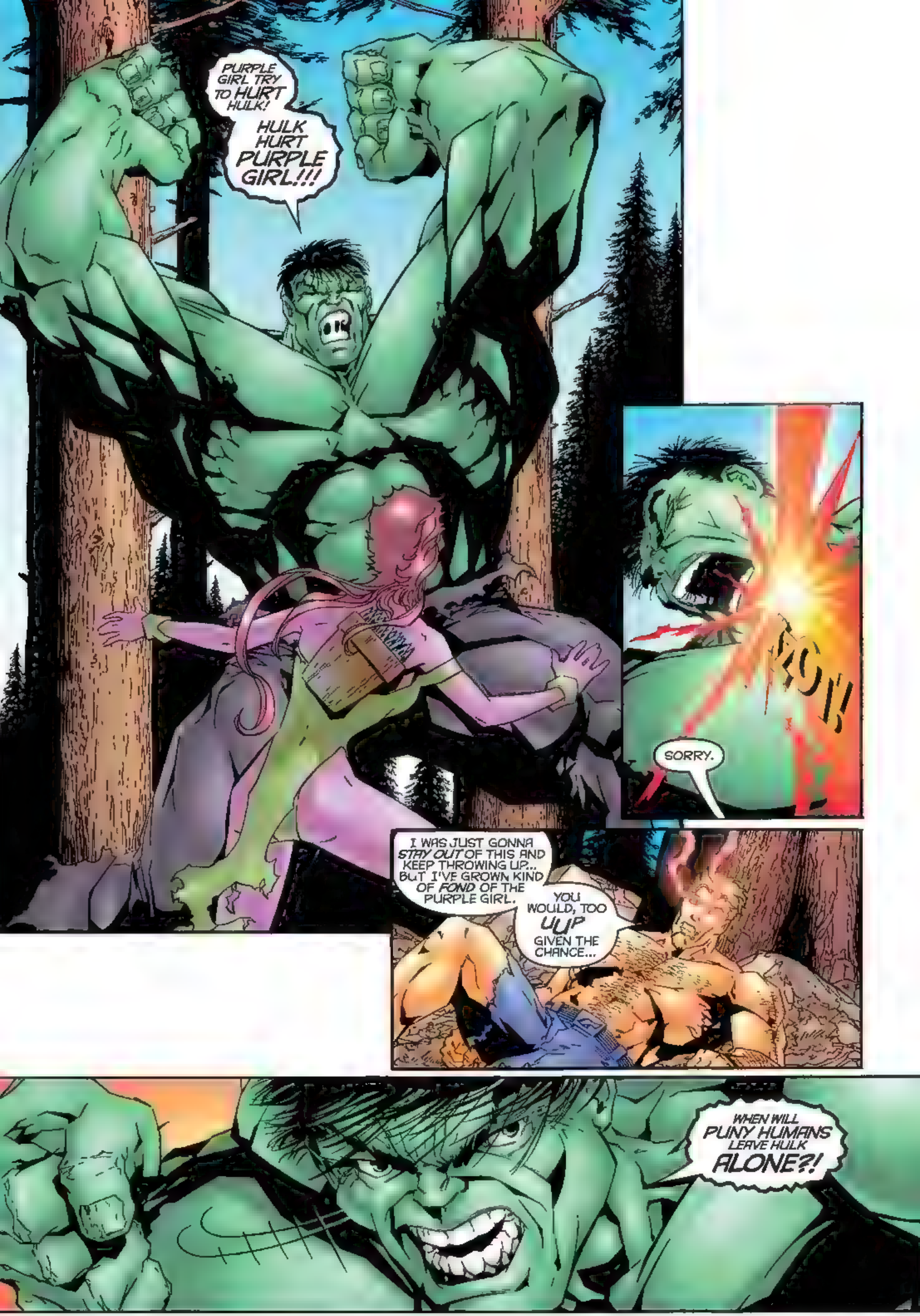

SIX STRANGERS, EACH AN X-MAN FROM A DIFFERENT REALITY, BROUGHT TOGETHER TO INSURE THAT LIFE AS WE KNOW IT DOESN'T CEASE TO EXIST! BLINK — TELEPORTER; MIMIC — POWERED BY HIS REALITY'S X-MEN; SUNFIRE — MISTRESS OF FLAME; T-BIRD — SUPER-STRENGTH AND SENSES; NOCTURNE — DAUGHTER OF NIGHTCRAWLER; AND MORPH — SHAPE-CHANGING FUNNY MAN. DESTINED TO FIX THE KINKS IN THE CHAINS OF REALITY, STAN LEE PRESENTS THE EXILES
UP NORTH AND IN THE GREEN
PART 1 OF 2
JUDD WINICK
JIM CALAFIORE
MARK McKENNA
TRANSPARENCY DIGITAL
PAUL TUTRONE
MIKE RAICHT
MIKE MARTS
JOE QUESADA
BILL JEMAS

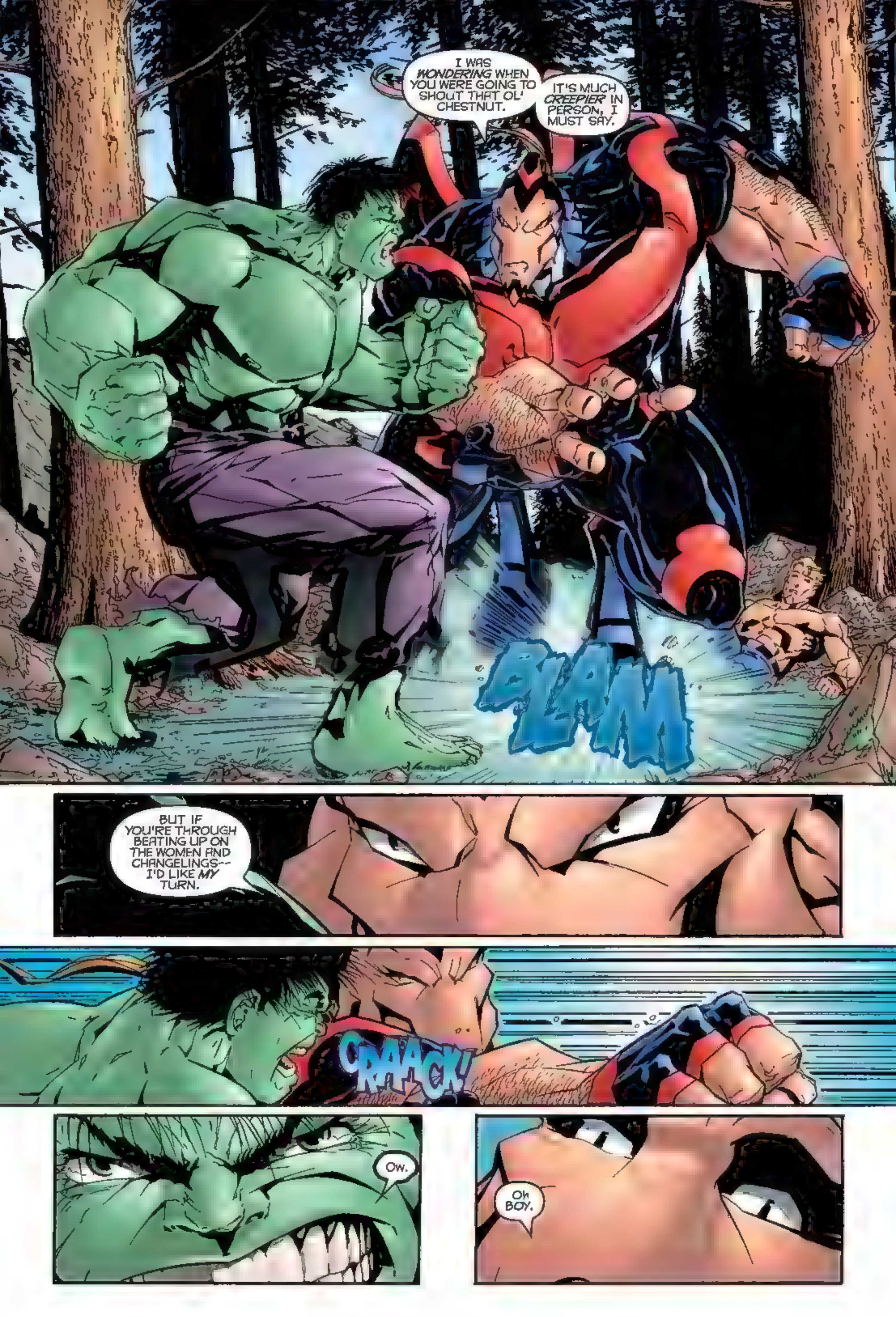

HULK!! IT'S THE @#%#&* HULK!! EVERYBODY RUN!!! RUUUUN!!
BLINK, WE SHOULD TAKE THIS *EASY.* YOU CAN NEVER TELL WITH HIM. HE *MIGHT* NOT BE LOOKING FOR A FIGHT.
RIGHT.
LET'S JUST *BACK OFF* HIM...
RIGHT.
TJ...?
YEAH?
WHO IS THIS?
OH, FOR *PETE'S SAKE*... WE GOTTA GET YOU A *STUDY GUIDE* TO BEING A HERO OUTSIDE OF THAT BACKWARD *HELLHOLE* YOU COME FROM...
"...THIS IS *THE HULK,* BABY. THEY DON'T *COME* ANY *BIGGER.*"

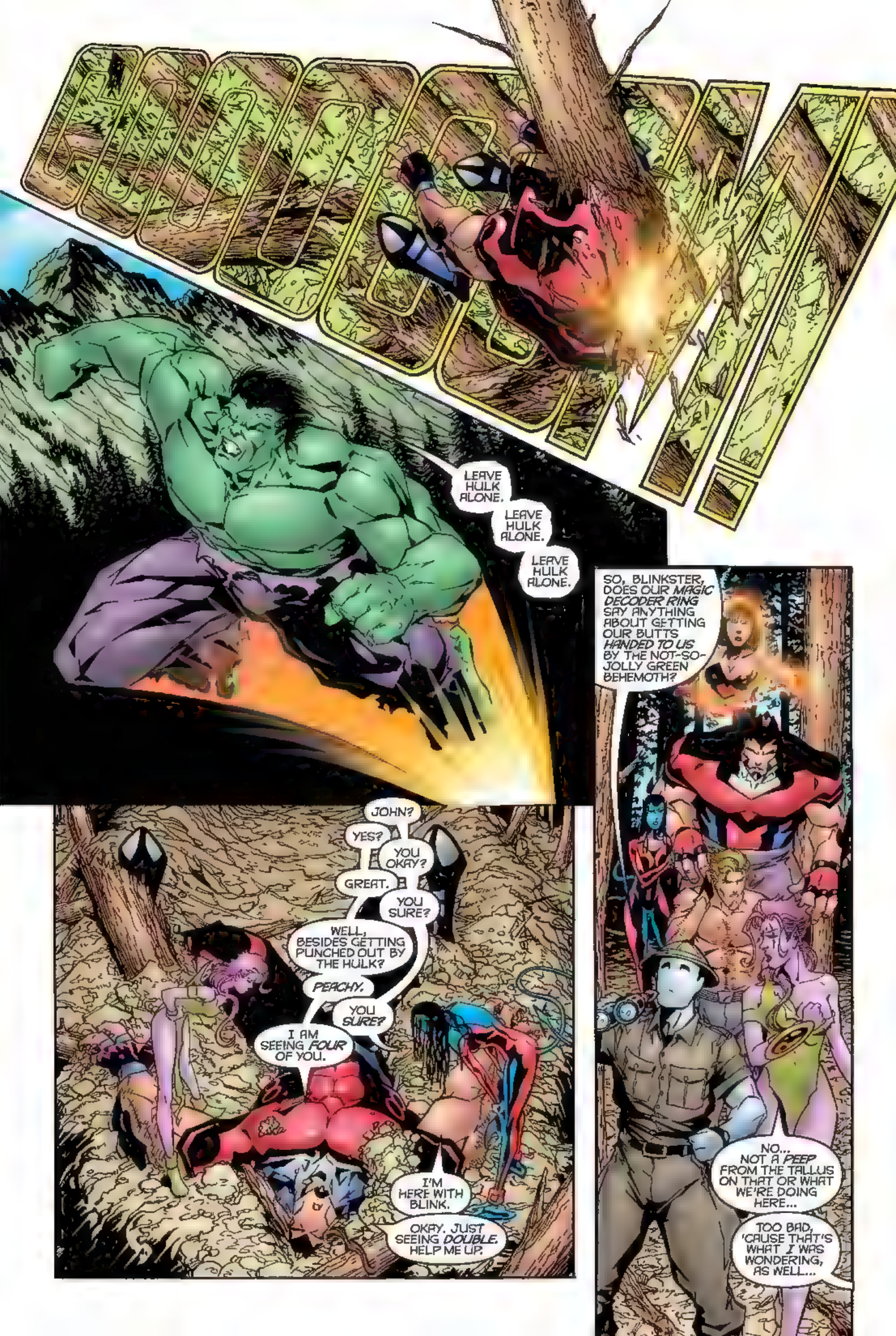

MAYBE I SHOULD JUST *TELEPORT* HIM A FEW MILES AWAY--
DON'T. IT'LL ONLY PISS HIM OFF.
B-GOK!
SNAP!
HULK SMASH!!!
OKAY-- *NOW* WE GO!
BWAAMF

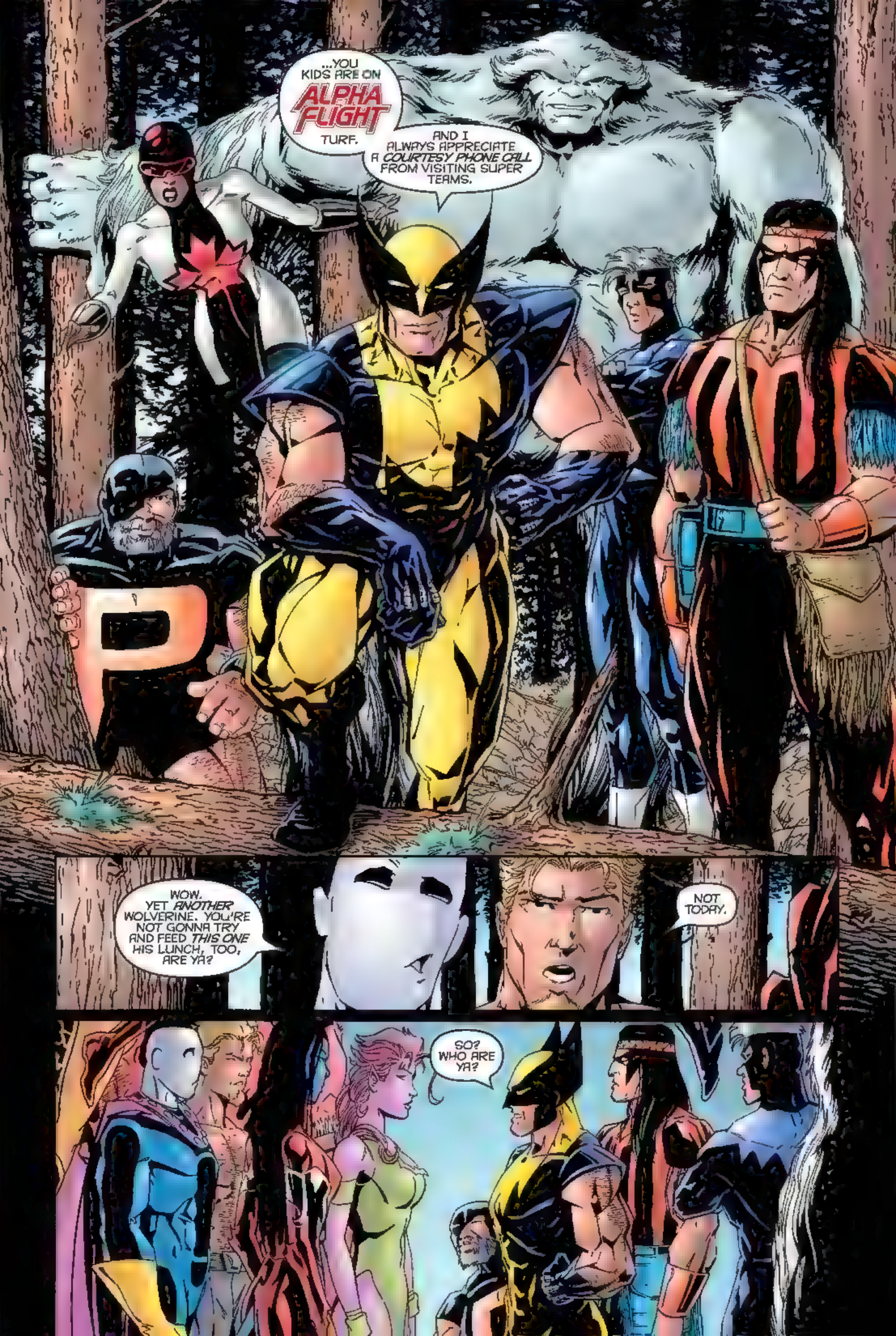

HOAAAR
I CAN'T HIT HIM *TOO* HARD OR I MIGHT SET THE WHOLE *FOREST* ABLAZE!
BUT IF I *DAZE* HIM--
FIRE! HULK *HATE* FIRE LADY!! *HATE FIRE!!*
BRAAMF!
AAAARGH!!
NO FIRE!! NO MORE FIRE!!
UGH!
YOU HIT A *GIRL*, YOU INSENSITIVE BUCKET OF CRAP!
I DON'T *CARE* HOW BIG AND STUPID AND FEROCIOUS AND INFUSED WITH DEADLY RADIATION YOU ARE, *WE DON'T HIT CHICKS!*
AAARGH!!

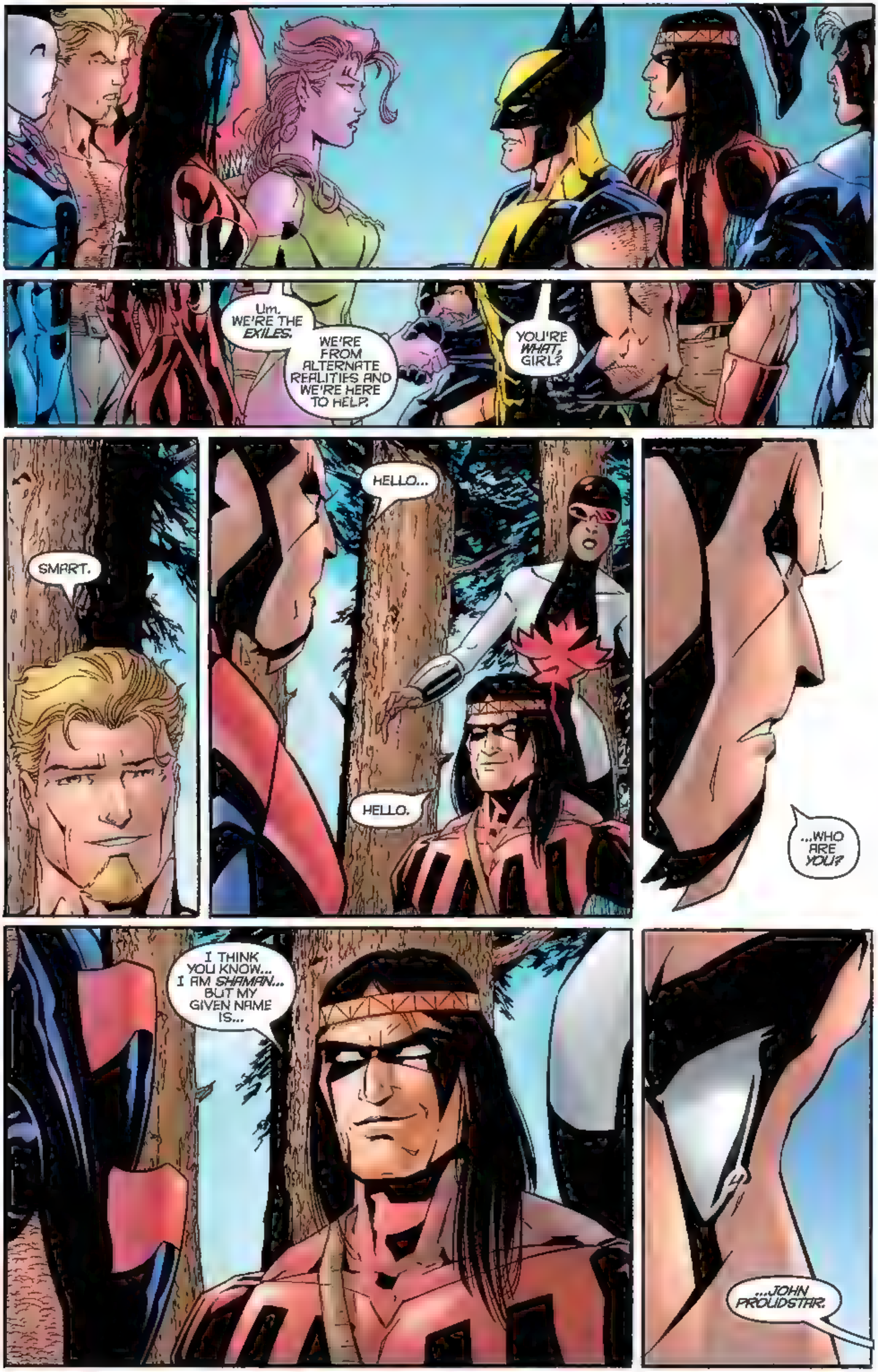

OW! OOWW! EASY! EASY!
OKAY-- EXCEPTION MADE-- YOU CAN HIT LADIES-- JUST BIGGER ONES!
OOWW!
RUBBER THING WILL STOP TALKING!!
AIM FOR THE WATER! THE WAAAAAAAAAAAAAAA
HULK WILL MAKE RUBBER THING GO AWAY!!!
Y'KNOW, THAT REFERRING TO YOURSELF IN THE THIRD PERSON MIGHT BE CONSTRUED AS NARCISSISM--
--BUT WE'LL DISCUSS THAT AFTER YOU'RE TELEPORTED A FEW MILES FROM HERE!!
BLINK!
GRRRRRR...
BLEEENNG--*
Ooookay. This is unexpectedly bad.

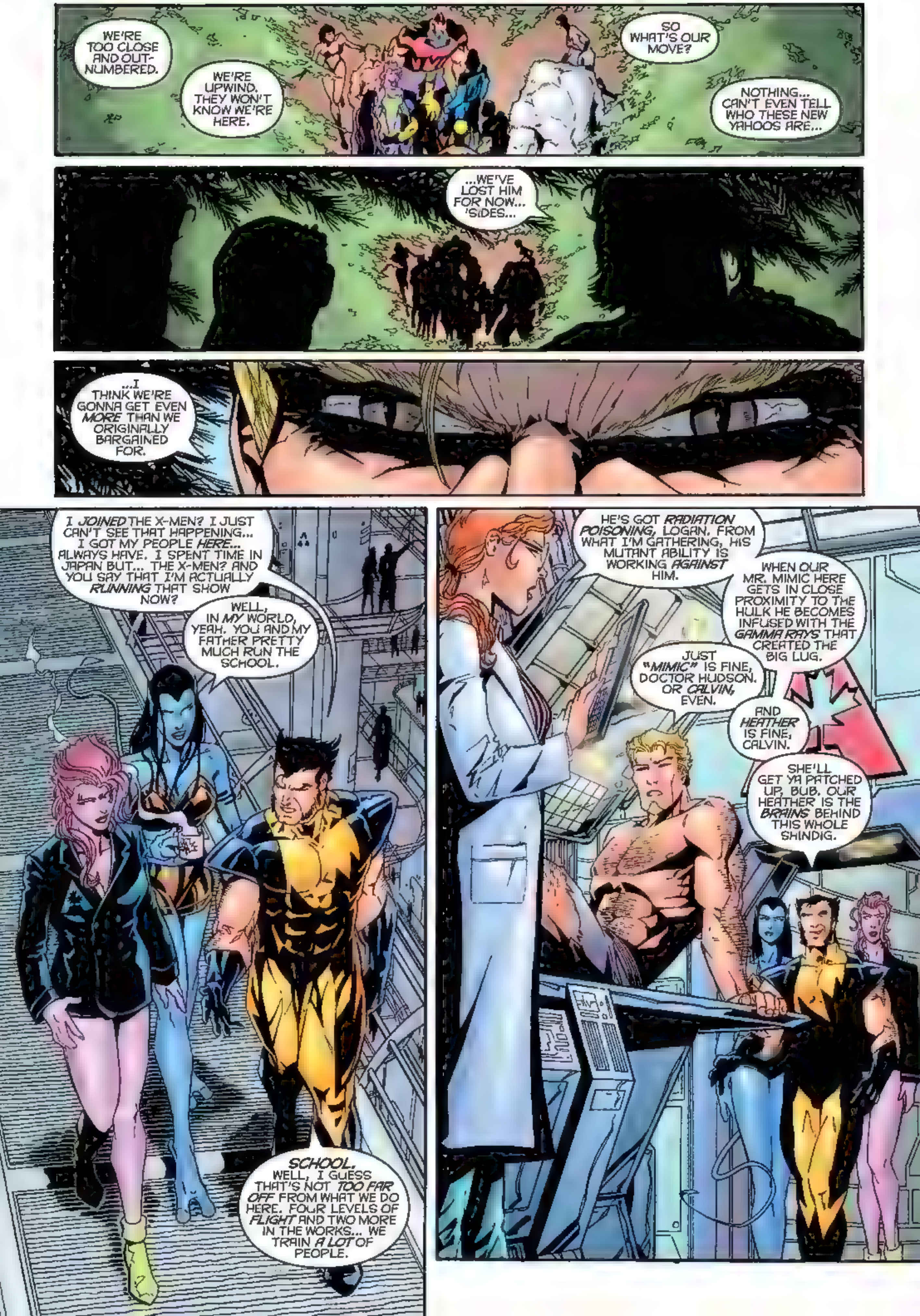

PURPLE GIRL TRY TO *HURT* HULK!
HULK HURT *PURPLE GIRL!!!*
KOW!
SORRY.
I WAS JUST GONNA *STAY OUT* OF THIS AND KEEP THROWING UP... BUT I'VE GROWN KIND OF *FOND* OF THE PURPLE GIRL.
YOU WOULD, TOO *UUP* GIVEN THE CHANCE...
WHEN WILL *PUNY HUMANS* LEAVE HULK *ALONE?!*

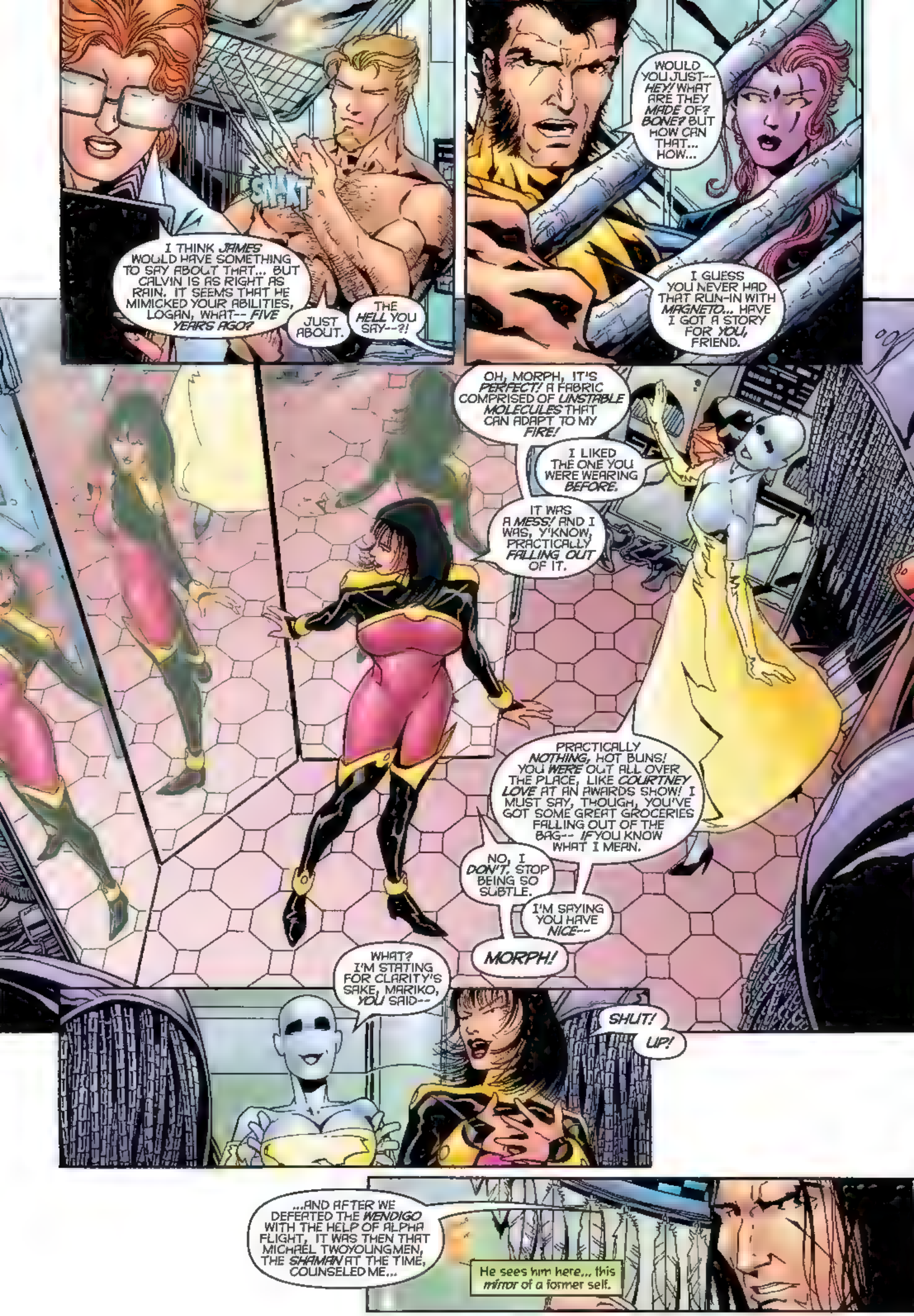

I WAS *WONDERING* WHEN YOU WERE GOING TO SHOUT THAT OL' CHESTNUT.
IT'S MUCH *CREEPIER* IN PERSON, I MUST SAY.
BLAM
BUT IF YOU'RE THROUGH BEATING UP ON THE WOMEN AND CHANGELINGS-- I'D LIKE *MY* TURN.
CRAACK!
OW.
Oh BOY.

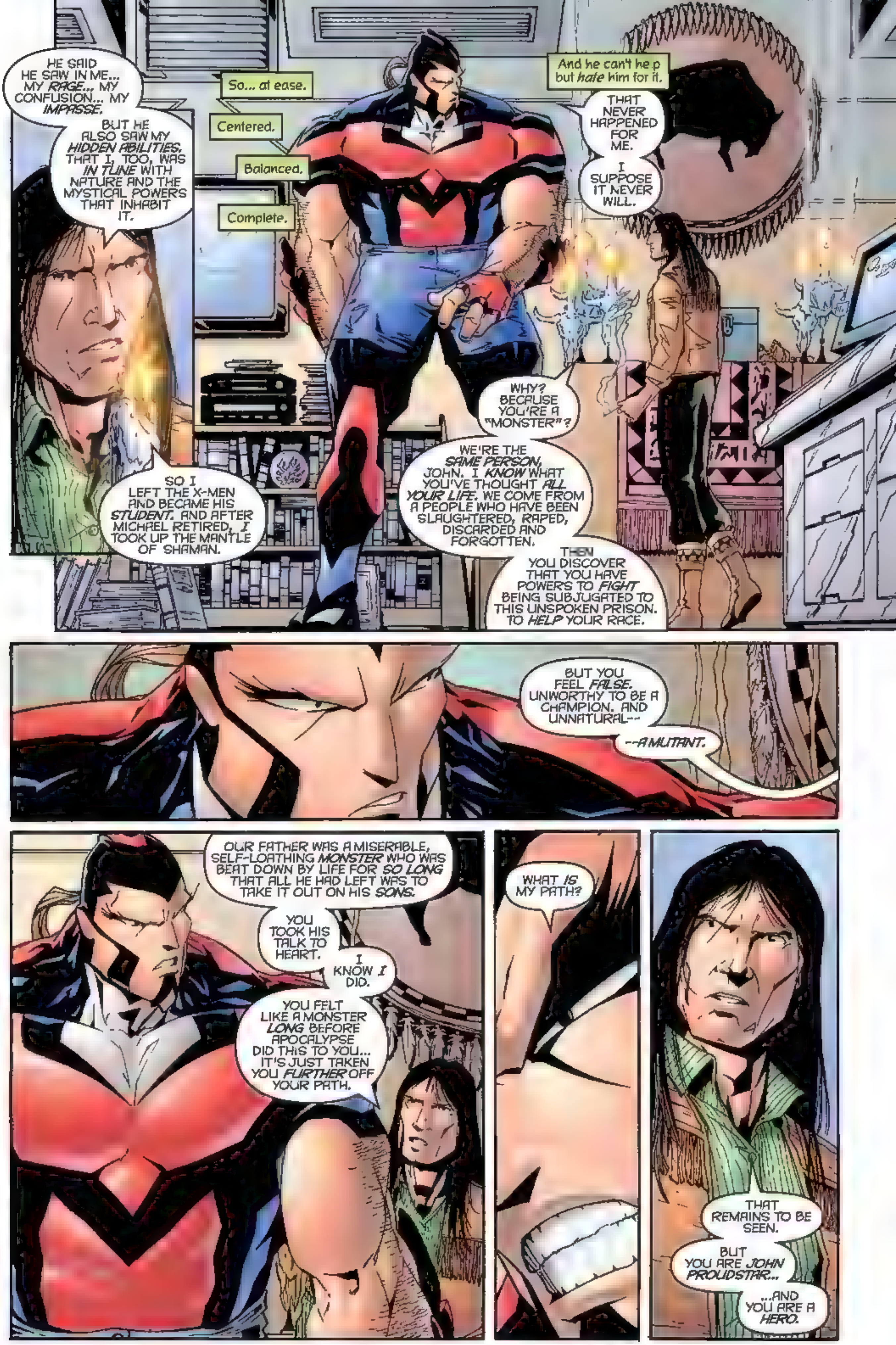

GOOOOOM!!
LEAVE HULK ALONE.
LEAVE HULK ALONE.
LEAVE HULK ALONE.
JOHN?
YES?
YOU OKAY?
GREAT.
YOU SURE?
WELL, BESIDES GETTING PUNCHED OUT BY THE HULK?
PEACHY.
YOU SURE?
I AM SEEING FOUR OF YOU.
I'M HERE WITH BLINK.
OKAY. JUST SEEING DOUBLE. HELP ME UP.
SO, BLINKSTER, DOES OUR MAGIC DECODER RING SAY ANYTHING ABOUT GETTING OUR BUTTS HANDED TO US BY THE NOT-SO-JOLLY GREEN BEHEMOTH?
NO... NOT A PEEP FROM THE TALLUS ON THAT OR WHAT WE'RE DOING HERE...
TOO BAD, 'CAUSE THAT'S WHAT I WAS WONDERING, AS WELL...

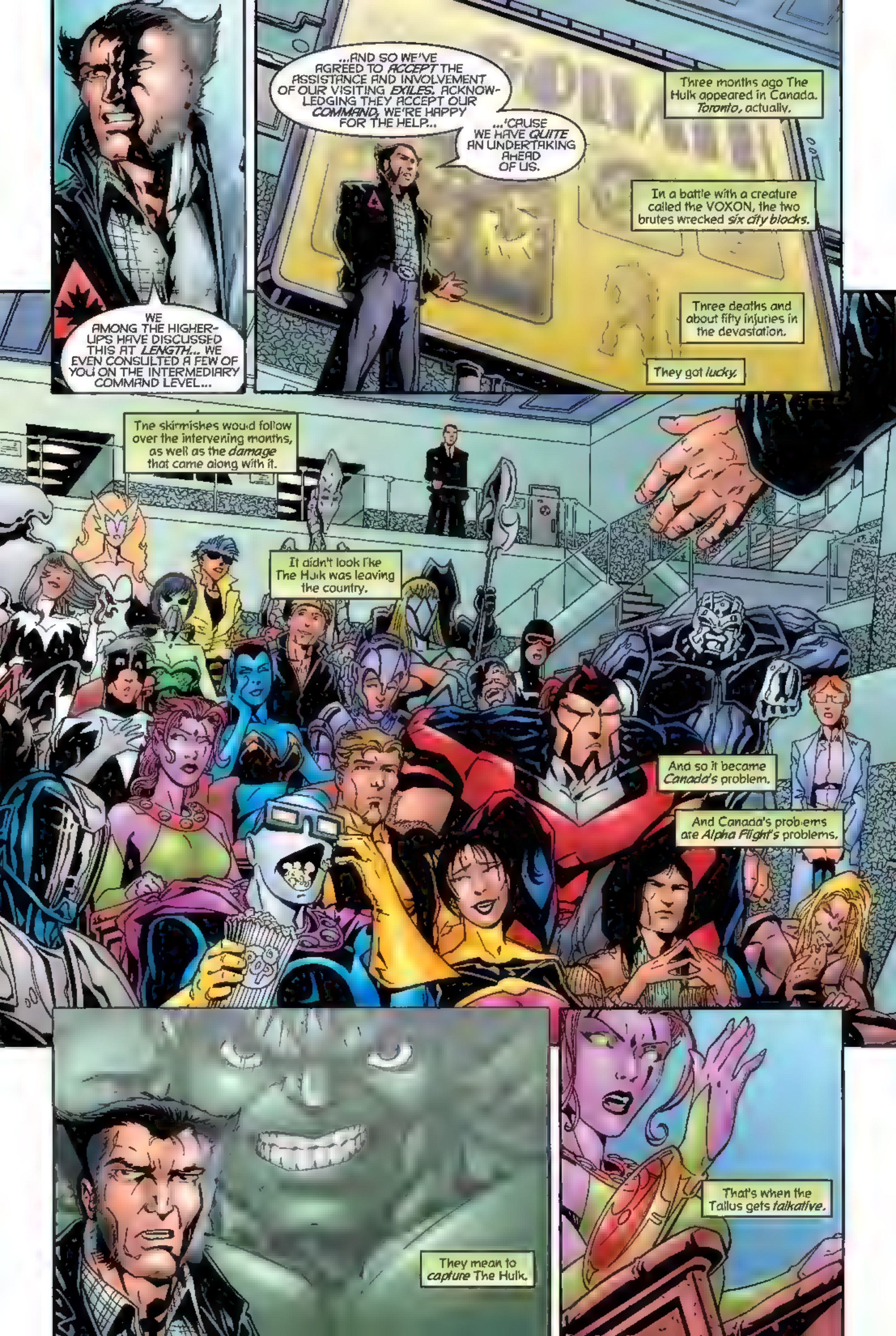

...YOU KIDS ARE ON ALPHA FLIGHT TURF.
AND I ALWAYS APPRECIATE A *COURTESY PHONE CALL* FROM VISITING SUPER TEAMS.
WOW. YET *ANOTHER* WOLVERINE. YOU'RE NOT GONNA TRY AND FEED *THIS ONE* HIS LUNCH, TOO, ARE YA?
NOT TODAY.
SO? WHO ARE YA?

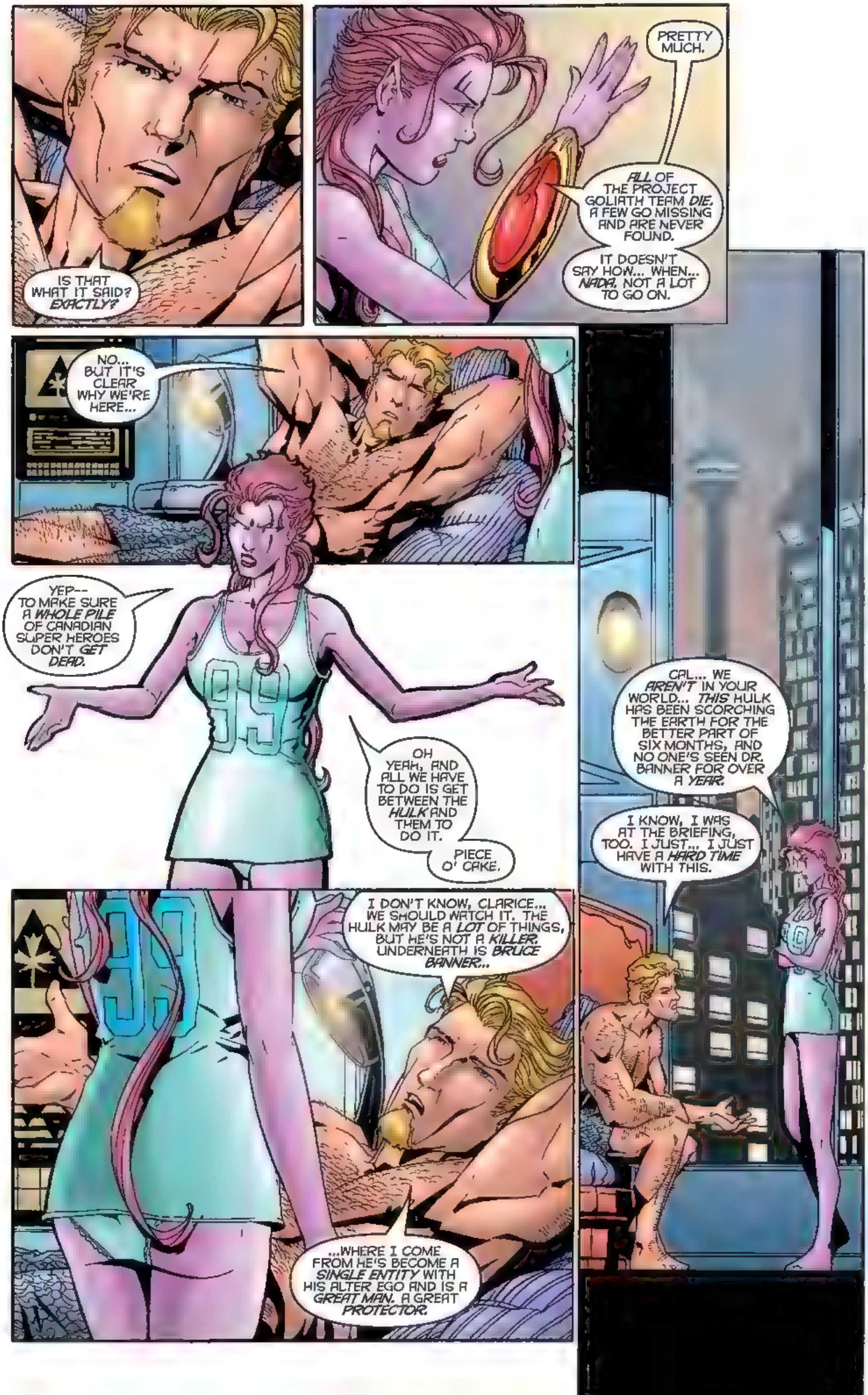

Um. WE'RE THE *EXILES*.
WE'RE FROM ALTERNATE REALITIES AND WE'RE HERE TO HELP.
YOU'RE *WHAT*, GIRL?
SMART.
HELLO...
HELLO.
...WHO ARE *YOU*?
I THINK YOU KNOW... I AM *SHAMAN*... BUT MY GIVEN NAME IS...
...JOHN PROUDSTAR.

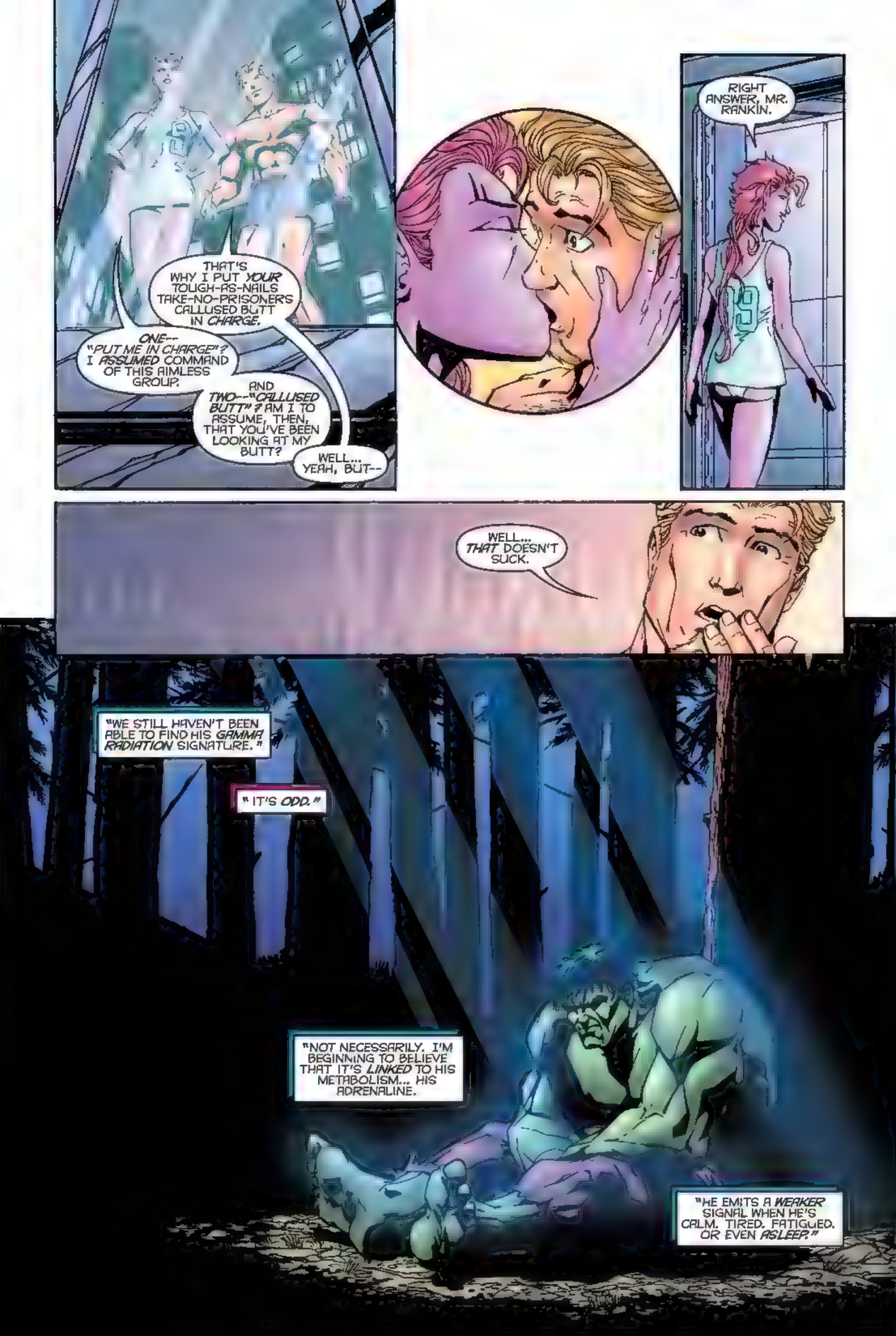

WE'RE TOO CLOSE AND OUT-NUMBERED.
WE'RE UPWIND. THEY WON'T KNOW WE'RE HERE.
SO WHAT'S OUR MOVE?
NOTHING... CAN'T EVEN TELL WHO THESE NEW YAHOOS ARE...
...WE'VE LOST HIM FOR NOW... 'SIDES...
...I THINK WE'RE GONNA GET EVEN *MORE* THAN WE ORIGINALLY BARGAINED FOR.
I *JOINED* THE X-MEN? I JUST CAN'T SEE THAT HAPPENING... I GOT MY PEOPLE *HERE*... ALWAYS HAVE. I SPENT TIME IN JAPAN BUT... THE X-MEN? AND YOU SAY THAT I'M ACTUALLY *RUNNING* THAT SHOW NOW?
WELL, IN *MY* WORLD, YEAH. YOU AND MY FATHER PRETTY MUCH RUN THE SCHOOL.
SCHOOL. WELL, I GUESS THAT'S NOT *TOO FAR OFF* FROM WHAT WE DO HERE. FOUR LEVELS OF *FLIGHT* AND TWO MORE IN THE WORKS... WE TRAIN *A LOT* OF PEOPLE.
HE'S GOT *RADIATION POISONING*, LOGAN. FROM WHAT I'M GATHERING, HIS MUTANT ABILITY IS WORKING *AGAINST* HIM.
WHEN OUR MR. MIMIC HERE GETS IN CLOSE PROXIMITY TO THE HULK HE BECOMES INFUSED WITH THE *GAMMA RAYS* THAT CREATED THE BIG LUG.
JUST *"MIMIC"* IS FINE, DOCTOR HUDSON. OR *CALVIN*, EVEN.
AND *HEATHER* IS FINE, CALVIN.
SHE'LL GET YA PATCHED UP, BUB. OUR HEATHER IS THE *BRAINS* BEHIND THIS WHOLE SHINDIG.

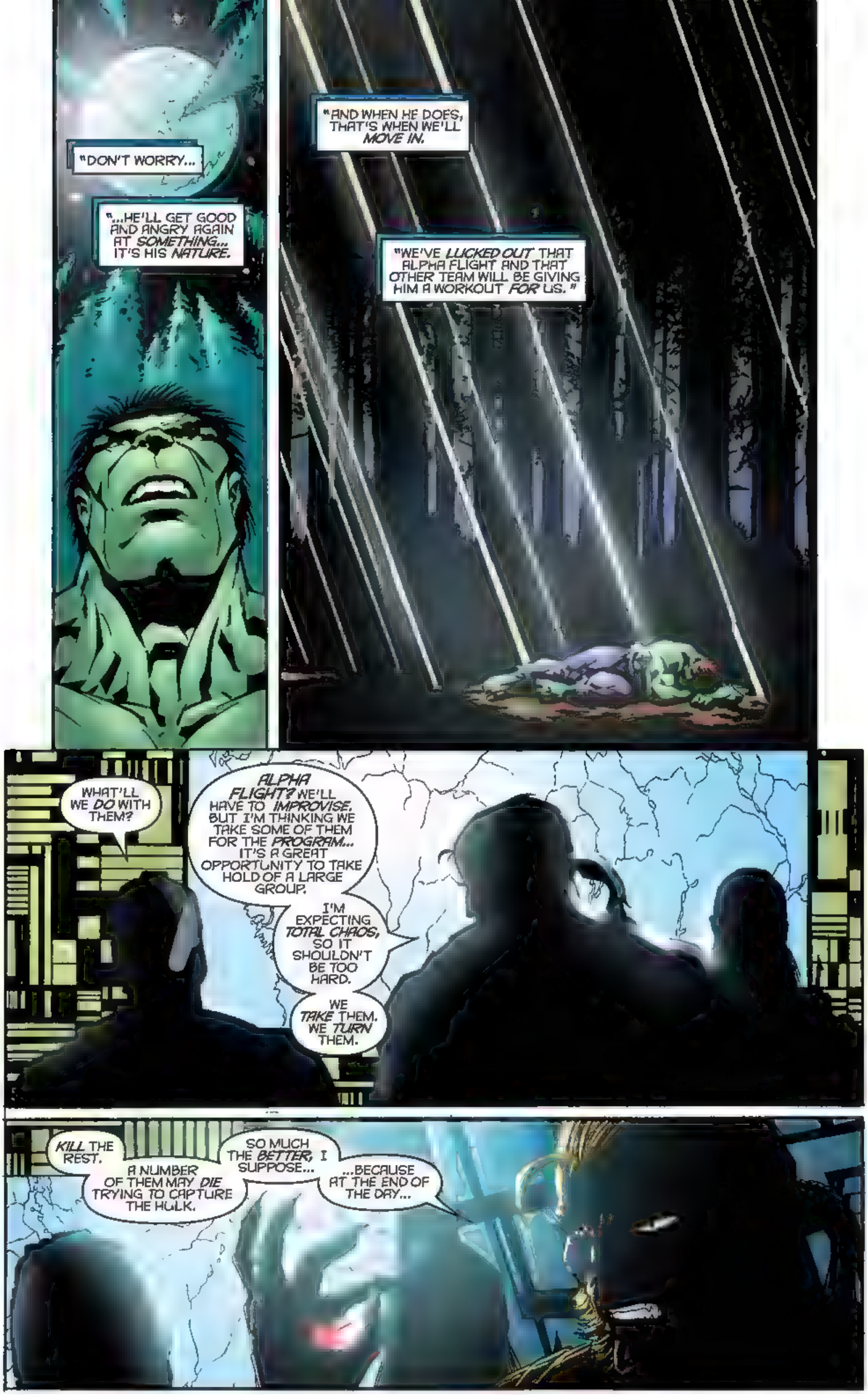

SNIKT
I THINK *JAMES* WOULD HAVE SOMETHING TO SAY ABOUT THAT... BUT CALVIN IS AS RIGHT AS RAIN. IT SEEMS THAT HE MIMICKED YOUR ABILITIES, LOGAN, WHAT-- *FIVE YEARS AGO?*
JUST ABOUT.
THE *HELL* YOU SAY--?!
WOULD YOU JUST-- *HEY!* WHAT ARE THEY *MADE* OF? *BONE?* BUT HOW CAN THAT... HOW...
I GUESS YOU NEVER HAD THAT RUN-IN WITH *MAGNETO...* HAVE I GOT A STORY FOR *YOU,* FRIEND.
OH, MORPH, IT'S *PERFECT!* A FABRIC COMPRISED OF *UNSTABLE MOLECULES* THAT CAN ADAPT TO MY *FIRE!*
I LIKED THE ONE YOU WERE WEARING *BEFORE.*
IT WAS A *MESS!* AND I WAS, Y'KNOW, PRACTICALLY *FALLING OUT* OF IT.
PRACTICALLY *NOTHING,* HOT BUNS! YOU *WERE* OUT ALL OVER THE PLACE, LIKE *COURTNEY LOVE* AT AN AWARDS SHOW! I MUST SAY, THOUGH, YOU'VE GOT SOME GREAT GROCERIES FALLING OUT OF THE BAG-- *IF* YOU KNOW WHAT I MEAN.
NO, I *DON'T.* STOP BEING SO SUBTLE.
I'M SAYING YOU HAVE *NICE*--
MORPH!
WHAT? I'M STATING FOR CLARITY'S SAKE, MARIKO, *YOU* SAID--
SHUT!
UP!
...AND AFTER WE DEFEATED THE *WENDIGO* WITH THE HELP OF ALPHA FLIGHT, IT WAS THEN THAT MICHAEL TWOYOUNGMEN, THE *SHAMAN* AT THE TIME, COUNSELED ME...
He sees him here... this *mirror* of a former self.

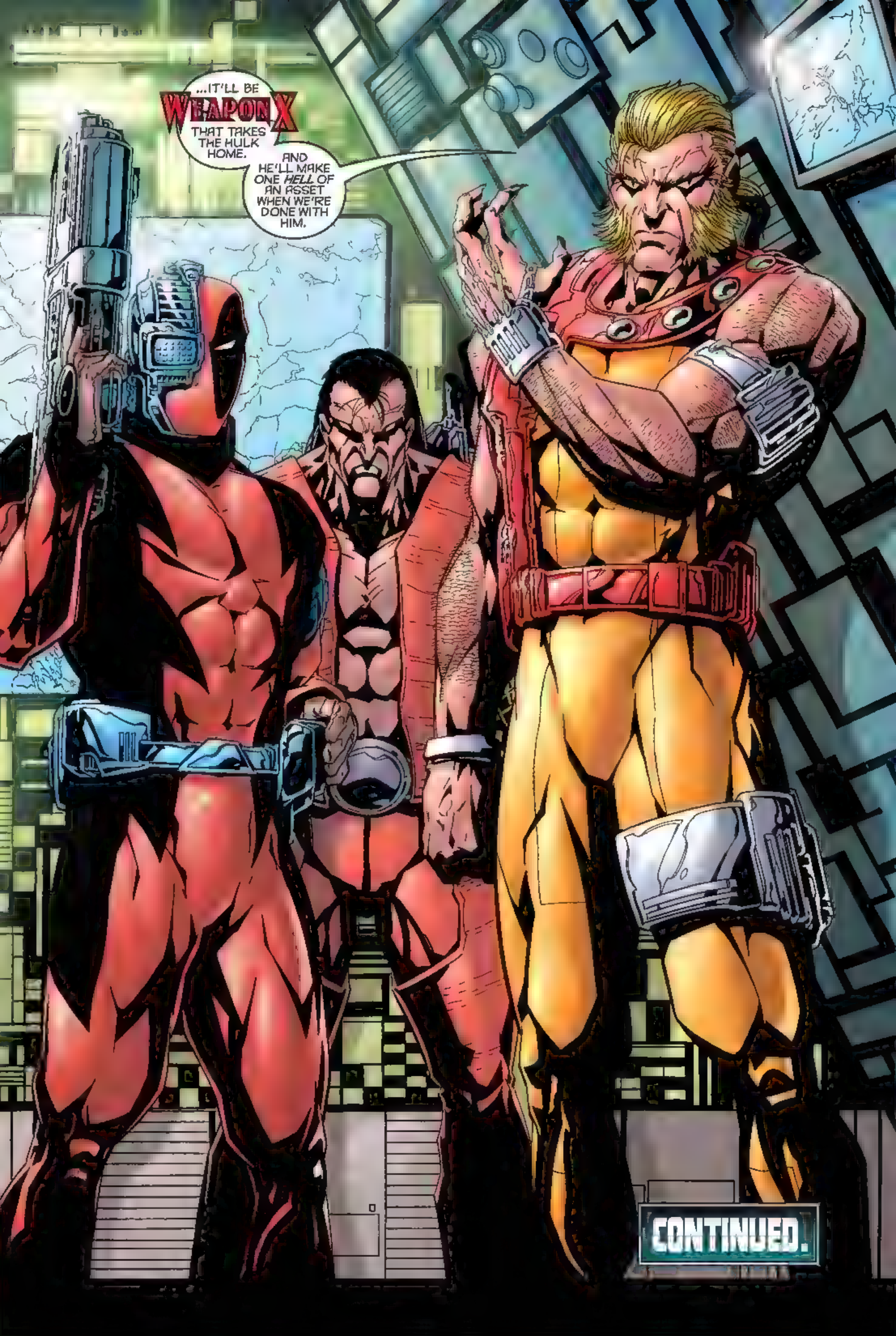

HE SAID HE SAW IN ME... MY *RAGE*... MY CONFUSION... MY *IMPASSE*.
BUT HE ALSO SAW MY *HIDDEN ABILITIES*. THAT I, TOO, WAS *IN TUNE* WITH NATURE AND THE MYSTICAL POWERS THAT INHABIT IT.
So... at ease.
Centered.
Balanced.
Complete.
SO I LEFT THE X-MEN AND BECAME HIS *STUDENT*. AND AFTER MICHAEL RETIRED, *I* TOOK UP THE MANTLE OF SHAMAN.
And he can't help but *hate* him for it.
THAT NEVER HAPPENED FOR ME.
I SUPPOSE IT NEVER WILL.
WHY? BECAUSE YOU'RE A "MONSTER"?
WE'RE THE *SAME PERSON*, JOHN. I *KNOW* WHAT YOU'VE THOUGHT *ALL YOUR LIFE*. WE COME FROM A PEOPLE WHO HAVE BEEN SLAUGHTERED, RAPED, DISCARDED AND FORGOTTEN.
THEN YOU DISCOVER THAT YOU HAVE POWERS TO *FIGHT* BEING SUBJUGATED TO THIS UNSPOKEN PRISON. TO *HELP* YOUR RACE.
BUT YOU FEEL *FALSE*. UNWORTHY TO BE A CHAMPION. AND UNNATURAL--
--*A MUTANT*.
OUR FATHER WAS A MISERABLE, SELF-LOATHING *MONSTER* WHO WAS BEAT DOWN BY LIFE FOR *SO LONG* THAT ALL HE HAD LEFT WAS TO TAKE IT OUT ON HIS *SONS*.
YOU TOOK HIS TALK TO HEART.
I KNOW *I* DID.
YOU FELT LIKE A MONSTER *LONG* BEFORE APOCALYPSE DID THIS TO YOU... IT'S JUST TAKEN YOU *FURTHER* OFF YOUR PATH.
WHAT *IS* MY PATH?
THAT REMAINS TO BE SEEN.
BUT YOU ARE *JOHN PROUDSTAR*...
...AND YOU ARE A *HERO*.


WE AMONG THE HIGHER-UPS HAVE DISCUSSED THIS AT *LENGTH*... WE EVEN CONSULTED A FEW OF YOU ON THE INTERMEDIARY COMMAND LEVEL...
...AND SO WE'VE AGREED TO *ACCEPT* THE ASSISTANCE AND INVOLVEMENT OF OUR VISITING *EXILES.* ACKNOWLEDGING THEY ACCEPT OUR *COMMAND,* WE'RE HAPPY FOR THE HELP...
...'CAUSE WE HAVE *QUITE* AN UNDERTAKING AHEAD OF US.
Three months ago The Hulk appeared in Canada. *Toronto,* actually.
In a battle with a creature called the VOXON, the two brutes wrecked *six city blocks.*
Three deaths and about fifty injuries in the devastation.
They got *lucky.*
The skirmishes would follow over the intervening months, as well as the *damage* that came along with it.
It didn't look like The Hulk was leaving the country.
And so it became *Canada's* problem.
And Canada's problems are *Alpha Flight's* problems.
They mean to *capture* The Hulk.
That's when the Tallus gets *talkative.*


IS THAT WHAT IT SAID? *EXACTLY?*
PRETTY MUCH.
ALL OF THE PROJECT GOLIATH TEAM *DIE.* A FEW GO MISSING AND ARE NEVER FOUND.
IT DOESN'T SAY HOW... WHEN... *NADA.* NOT A LOT TO GO ON.
NO... BUT IT'S CLEAR WHY WE'RE HERE...
YEP-- TO MAKE SURE A *WHOLE PILE* OF CANADIAN SUPER HEROES DON'T *GET DEAD.*
OH YEAH, AND ALL WE HAVE TO DO IS GET BETWEEN THE *HULK* AND THEM TO DO IT.
PIECE O' CAKE.
I DON'T KNOW, CLARICE... WE SHOULD WATCH IT. THE HULK MAY BE A *LOT* OF THINGS, BUT HE'S NOT A *KILLER.* UNDERNEATH IS *BRUCE BANNER...*
...WHERE I COME FROM HE'S BECOME A *SINGLE ENTITY* WITH HIS ALTER EGO AND IS A *GREAT MAN.* A GREAT *PROTECTOR.*
CAL... WE *AREN'T* IN YOUR WORLD... *THIS* HULK HAS BEEN SCORCHING THE EARTH FOR THE BETTER PART OF SIX MONTHS, AND NO ONE'S SEEN DR. BANNER FOR OVER A *YEAR.*
I KNOW, I WAS AT THE BRIEFING, TOO. I JUST... I JUST HAVE A *HARD TIME* WITH THIS.


THAT'S WHY I PUT *YOUR* TOUGH-AS-NAILS TAKE-NO-PRISONERS CALLUSED BUTT IN *CHARGE.*
ONE-- "*PUT ME IN CHARGE*"? I *ASSUMED* COMMAND OF THIS AIMLESS GROUP.
AND *TWO--*"*CALLUSED BUTT*"? AM I TO ASSUME, THEN, THAT YOU'VE BEEN LOOKING AT MY BUTT?
WELL... YEAH, BUT--
RIGHT ANSWER, MR. RANKIN.
WELL... *THAT* DOESN'T SUCK.
"WE STILL HAVEN'T BEEN ABLE TO FIND HIS *GAMMA RADIATION* SIGNATURE."
"IT'S *ODD.*"
"NOT NECESSARILY. I'M BEGINNING TO BELIEVE THAT IT'S *LINKED* TO HIS METABOLISM... HIS ADRENALINE.
"HE EMITS A *WEAKER* SIGNAL WHEN HE'S CALM. TIRED. FATIGUED. OR EVEN *ASLEEP.*"


"DON'T WORRY...
"...HE'LL GET GOOD AND ANGRY AGAIN AT *SOMETHING*... IT'S HIS *NATURE*.
"AND WHEN HE DOES, THAT'S WHEN WE'LL *MOVE IN*.
"WE'VE *LUCKED OUT* THAT ALPHA FLIGHT AND THAT OTHER TEAM WILL BE GIVING HIM A WORKOUT *FOR* US."
WHAT'LL WE *DO* WITH THEM?
ALPHA FLIGHT? WE'LL HAVE TO *IMPROVISE*, BUT I'M THINKING WE TAKE SOME OF THEM FOR THE *PROGRAM*... IT'S A GREAT OPPORTUNITY TO TAKE HOLD OF A LARGE GROUP.
I'M EXPECTING *TOTAL CHAOS*, SO IT SHOULDN'T BE TOO HARD.
WE *TAKE* THEM. WE *TURN* THEM.
KILL THE REST.
A NUMBER OF THEM MAY *DIE* TRYING TO CAPTURE THE HULK.
SO MUCH THE *BETTER*, I SUPPOSE...
...BECAUSE AT THE END OF THE DAY...


...IT'LL BE WEAPON X THAT TAKES THE HULK HOME.
AND HE'LL MAKE ONE *HELL* OF AN ASSET WHEN WE'RE DONE WITH HIM.
CONTINUED.

EXILES

THE TALLUS SPEAKS

In EXILES # 3 and 4 the team had to make sure that the Jean Grey of the reality they were teleported to was killed before she could destroy the entire universe as Phoenix

PG 2: Mimic lost his wings while "mimicking" some of Phoenix's immense power away from Jean Grey
PG 6 The Hulk and Blink never met each other in the Age of Apocalypse
PG 14. Shaman is the John Proudstar of the reality in EXILES #5 while T-Bird is his counterpart in his own [illegible]
PG 15 Wolverine never joined the X-Men in this reality leaving him to command Alpha Flight (just as Department H had always intended him to in normal Marvel continuity)
PG 15: The Mimic of the regular Marvel Universe actually "died" when he absorbed too much of the Hulk's radiation. Hence, the reaction this Mimic has to his first contact with the green behemoth

Guys

Congratulations

This is one of my favorite X-comics to come out of Marvel in a long time! This first issue had everything going for it — and I hope it becomes the hit it deserves to be! I admit I was skeptical at first, but EXILES #1 blew me away! BLINK is naturally my favorite character but I'm totally looking forward to getting to know the others! You've got another fan!

Scott Lobdell
Hollywood, CA

Thanks for the praise, Scott! And for those of you who don't know who the letter writer above is [and who hasn't heard of Scott Lobdell?! – MIKE & MIKE], Scott was a longtime writer of the UNCANNY X-MEN and recently plotted the BLINK limited series, as well as the "Eve of Destruction" storyline in the X-MEN books! Praise from one of the men who made BLINK the character she is today makes us proud! We hope you keep reading, Scott!

Dear EXILES

Okay, I can be calm. I can be coherent. I can even ask my question in a civilized manner. Even though my gut reaction is to go 2000 BC and do something barbaric and possibly violent in nature, I won't. I don't want to break a nail. Anyway, back to the question ... why was Magnus killed off so early? He was one of my two favorite characters! I liked both him and Nocturne the best. You wouldn't believe how many favorite characters I've lost! It's enough to give a girl a complex! I mean, the scare Gambit gave me

Actually, that reminds me. Will an alternate reality Gambit ever be making an appearance here in the EXILES? It *would've* been cool to see Magnus's reaction if he found Gambit and Rogue gettin' cozy with no Magneto in sight (or as cozy as they could be with Rogue's powers how they are!). Oh well. I guess that won't be happening now. And it might have ended up kind of rigor mortis-like for Gambit, anyway!

Jenn
(Address withheld by request)

Come on! Please! Try to refrain from any violence, Jenn! This isn't the WOLVERINE letters page, after all—it's the EXILES! We know that Magnus was a cool character ... heck, we liked him a lot, too ... but, hey, it was just his time to go. Who knows what would have happened to that world (or even that entire *universe*) if not for the sacrifice of Magnus? We promise we didn't choose your favorite character on purpose and do away with him just to get you mad (although, now that we know your *second* favorite is Nocturne ... hmmm. Haha! – MIKE & MIKE]

Will Gambit ever show up in the pages of the EXILES? Probably ... but we still have a lot of other great characters to get through first. And hey, wasn't the appearance of Sabretooth at the end of this issue worth the price of admission alone?! More surprises await next issue, so stay tuned!

Dear Guys.

I just started reading EXILES with #3 and I really like it! I mainly started reading the book because it had Blink in it, but I like all of the other characters, too. If I had to list the team in order from most favorite to least it would be

[illegible]
Mimic
Nocturne
Morph
T-Bird
Sunfire

I like them in this order for lots of reasons, but I don't want to take up all of your time. I have one question for you guys: will the team be running into Sabretooth anytime soon? I hope you guys keep up the good work!

Caleb Wimmer
Jewel Ridge, VA

Hey, you people wanted Sabretooth, and we delivered! We're glad you like Blink, Caleb, but she seems to be *everybody's* favorite. We must admit that some of the other characters have begun challenging her for the top spot on our favorites list. [Mimic and Nocturne are two of our favorites, as well. And Mike M. seems to have a soft spot for Sunfire. – MIKE & MIKE] All the characters add something to our little team of misplaced heroes. More characters to come, of course, but who will be the next to go? The answer is going to shock you!

Dear EXILES crew

First of all, I would like to say that EXILES grabbed me right from the start! I'll occasionally pick up an X-comic or two, but I don't usually follow them all that much. I can tell you right now, I am definitely following this comic wherever it leads. I've always wanted to see Blink lead a team and now I've got it! I like Mimic, Nocturne and Morph. I like Sunfire (great use of Mariko by the way) better than Magnus and I don't really know much about T-Bird yet, but I'm intrigued by him.

I just finished reading part one of "Old Wounds, New Battles". All I can say is, Wow! The Mimic/Wolverine clash was awesome! I didn't think anyone could beat Wolvie! Mimic seems kind of like his reality's Cyclops. He loved Jean, was Xavier's choice as leader ... I can't wait to read part two! I wonder if there will be the inevitable Nocturne/Nightcrawler clash that we're all hoping for!

I do have a couple of questions for you.

1 Are you going to keep killing team members off? It seems like in every new series Marvel kills a member off! I really like your line-up, but I don't think you should kill anyone else off

2 Are we going to already be familiar with the characters from all of the different realities the Exiles visit? In every reality so far it seems like we already know all the major players.

That's it for the questions. You guys are doing a great job! Keep it up

Alex Warheit
(Address withheld by request)

We're glad you've been enjoying the book, Alex, because we've enjoyed putting it together for you and all the other EXILES readers. We hope you've been learning a bit more about each of the characters, but next issue prepare to get an extra helping of T-Bird as he and Shaman learn a little bit more about what T-Bird is truly capable of. It's going to be cool, so check it out! We loved the Mimic/Wolverine fight, as well, and it showed how tough and determined Mimic truly is! Now on to your questions

1 Will members die? Yes. Which ones and when? We're not telling!

2 The realities the Exiles travel to may look familiar now, but eventually they'll travel to a reality which has characters no one has ever seen before . . which will be truly awesome! Stay tuned!

Dear EXILES.

I love this new team! Judd and Mike (and the rest of you, of course) are really making me care about a team that I'm only just getting to know. My favorite character so far is Mimic but I also like Morph, as well! He's really funny. The fight between Mimic and Wolverine was amazing and I can't wait to see what happens to the team when they face off against Phoenix next issue! Hopefully no one will die!

I have a couple of questions

1 I just started reading comics recently (thanks to my uncle), and I was wondering what happened in the classic Phoenix storyline and where I can get it?

2. Will Morph and Sunfire be getting together? They seem like a cute couple!

3. Please don't kill Mimic! (Not really a question, but it needed to be said.)

Thanks for putting out a really cool book

Molly Stagnetti
Canastota, NY

Thanks for writing in, Molly ... and thanks to your uncle for getting you into reading comics! We need more uncles like that!

As you saw in EXILES #4 a lot of characters died ... just none of them were Exiles. Phew! But it was definitely a tragic end for that reality's X-Men, to say the least! Now on to your questions.

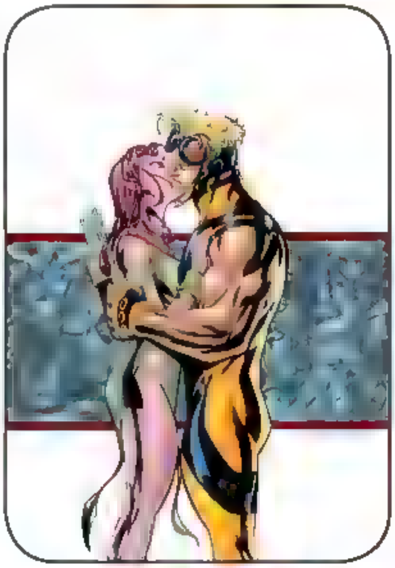
1 You can get a full helping of Phoenix's sad tale in "THE DARK PHOENIX SAGA" which was recently re-released as a trade paperback in most bookstores and all comic book shops! Dial 1-888-COMICBOOK to find the comics store closest to you! The Phoenix storyline is one of our all-time favorites and one of the greatest tales ever told, period. So it's definitely worth the read!

2. Morph and Sunfire? Maybe! Check out the cover to next issue for a hint at who might be getting together romantically next issue!

3. Don't kill Mimic? We'll see what we can do

Now on to next month! Sabretooth is stalking the Hulk, but what could he want? What does this mean for our band of heroes ... and will everyone survive? We know you can't wait to get your hands on EXILES #6!

MIKE & MIKE



MIKE RAICHT
ASSISTANT EDITOR

MIKE MARTS
EDITOR

JOE QUESADA
CHIEF

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NEXT ISSUE:

ALPHA FLIGHT! THE HULK! SABRETOOTH! WOW! SEE YA IN 30!

EXILES

MARVEL

6

MCKONE MCKENNA CHU

WINICK
CALAFIORE
CANNON

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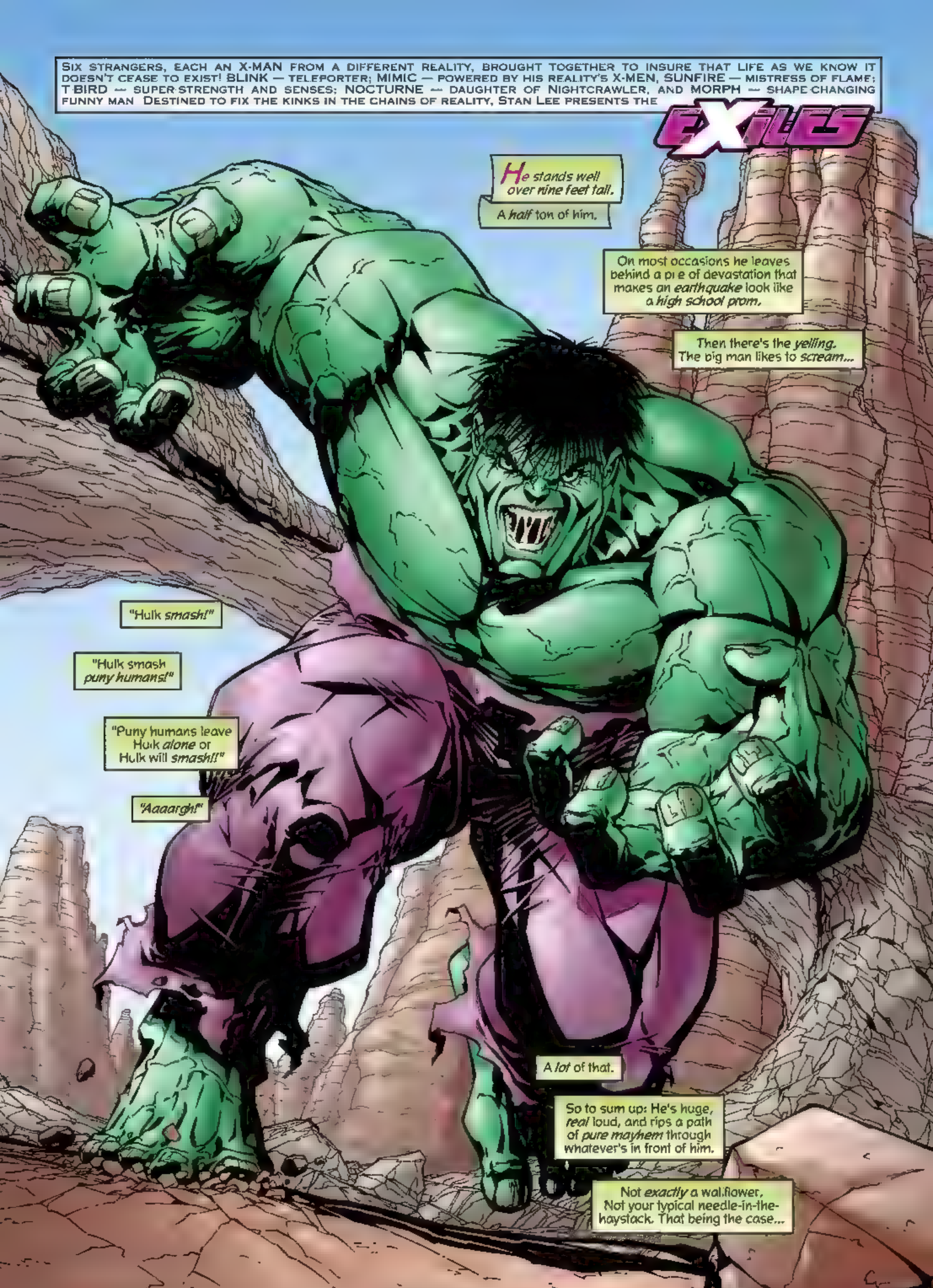
SIX STRANGERS, EACH AN X-MAN FROM A DIFFERENT REALITY, BROUGHT TOGETHER TO INSURE THAT LIFE AS WE KNOW IT DOESN'T CEASE TO EXIST! BLINK — TELEPORTER; MIMIC — POWERED BY HIS REALITY'S X-MEN, SUNFIRE — MISTRESS OF FLAME; T-BIRD — SUPER-STRENGTH AND SENSES; NOCTURNE — DAUGHTER OF NIGHTCRAWLER, AND MORPH — SHAPE-CHANGING FUNNY MAN. DESTINED TO FIX THE KINKS IN THE CHAINS OF REALITY, STAN LEE PRESENTS THE
EXILES
He stands well over nine feet tall.
A half ton of him.
On most occasions he leaves behind a pile of devastation that makes an earthquake look like a high school prom.
Then there's the yelling. The big man likes to scream...
"Hulk smash!"
"Hulk smash puny humans!"
"Puny humans leave Hulk alone or Hulk will smash!!"
"Aaaargh!"
A lot of that.
So to sum up: He's huge, real loud, and rips a path of pure mayhem through whatever's in front of him.
Not exactly a wallflower. Not your typical needle-in-the-haystack. That being the case...

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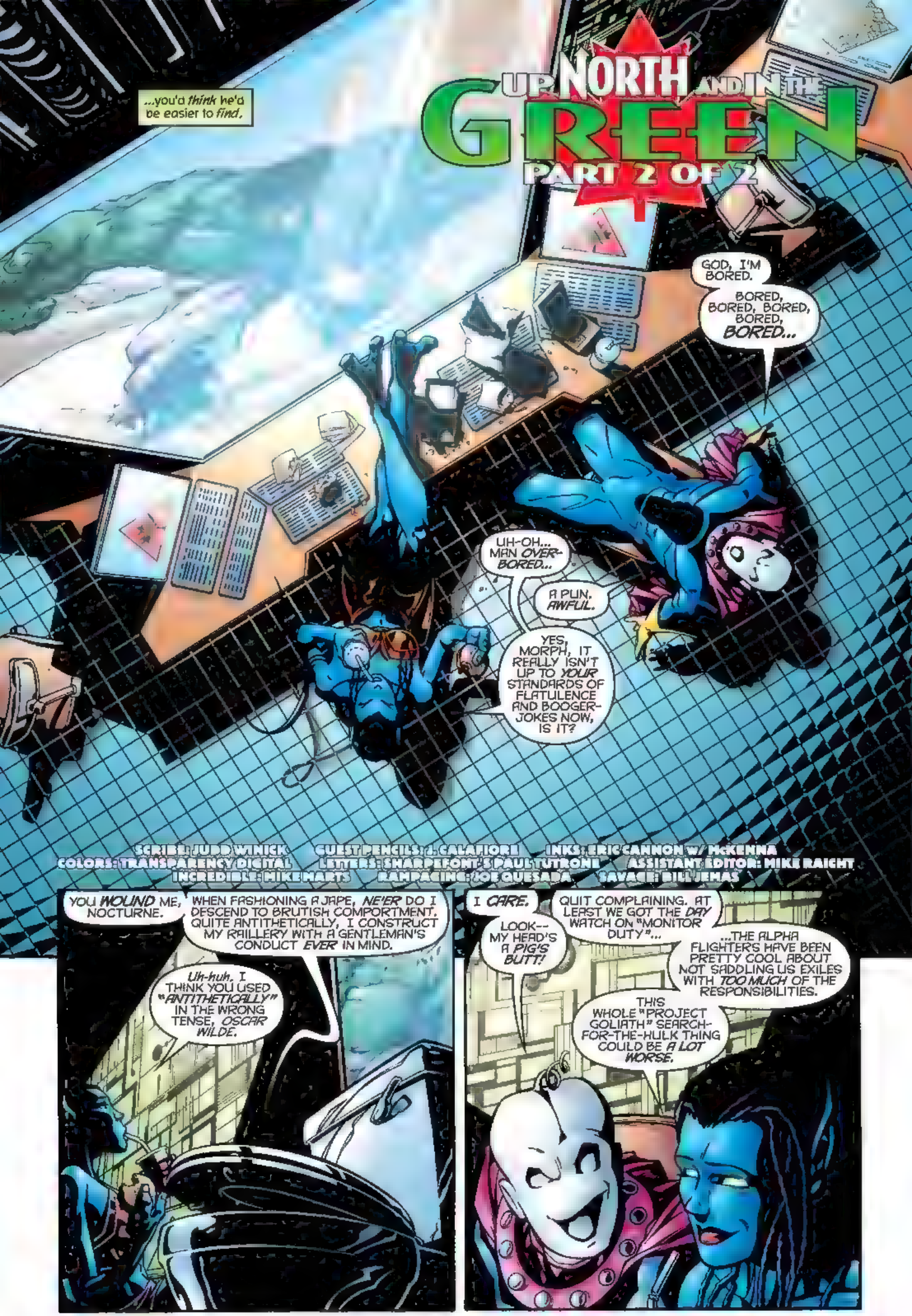
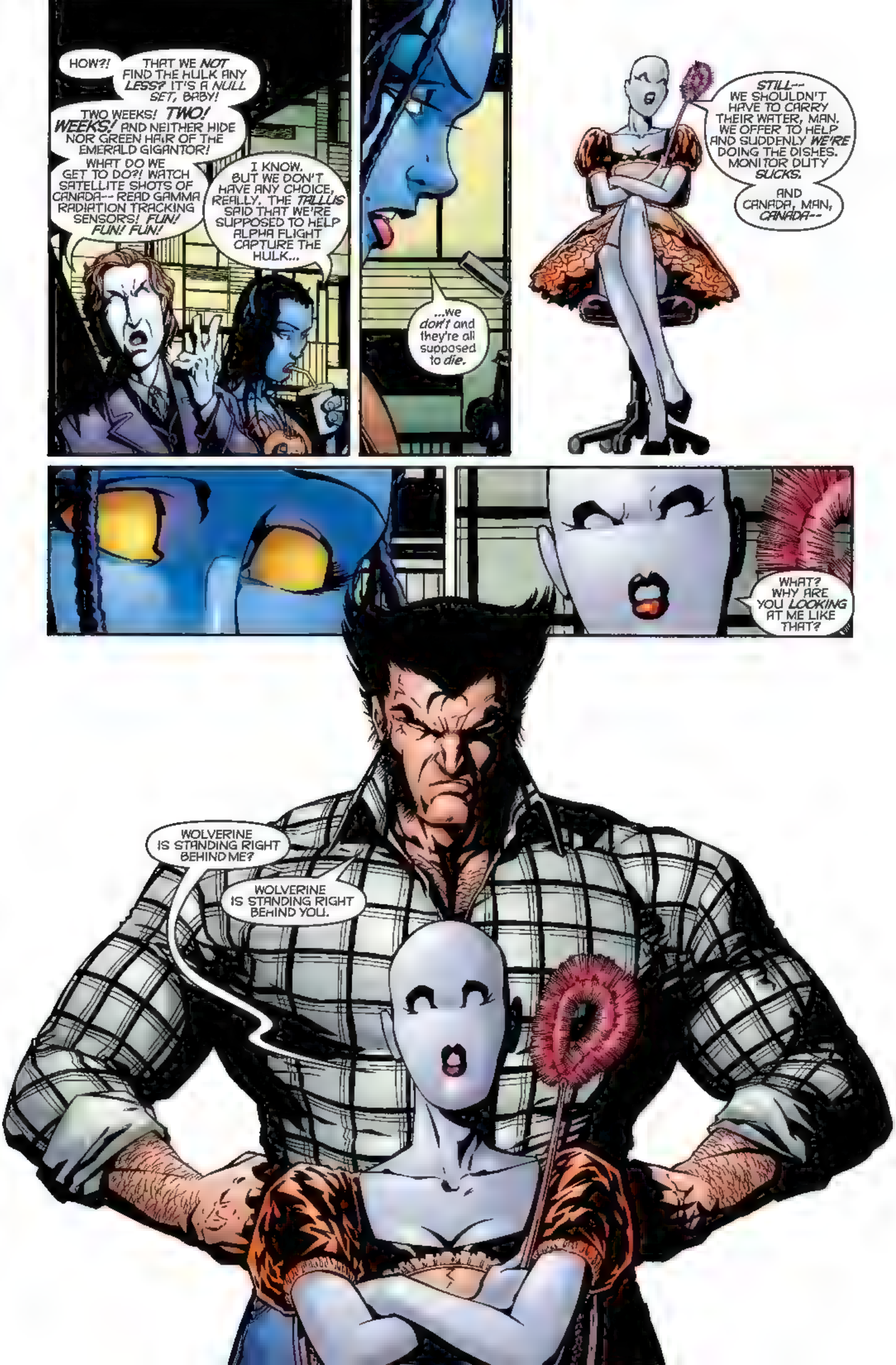
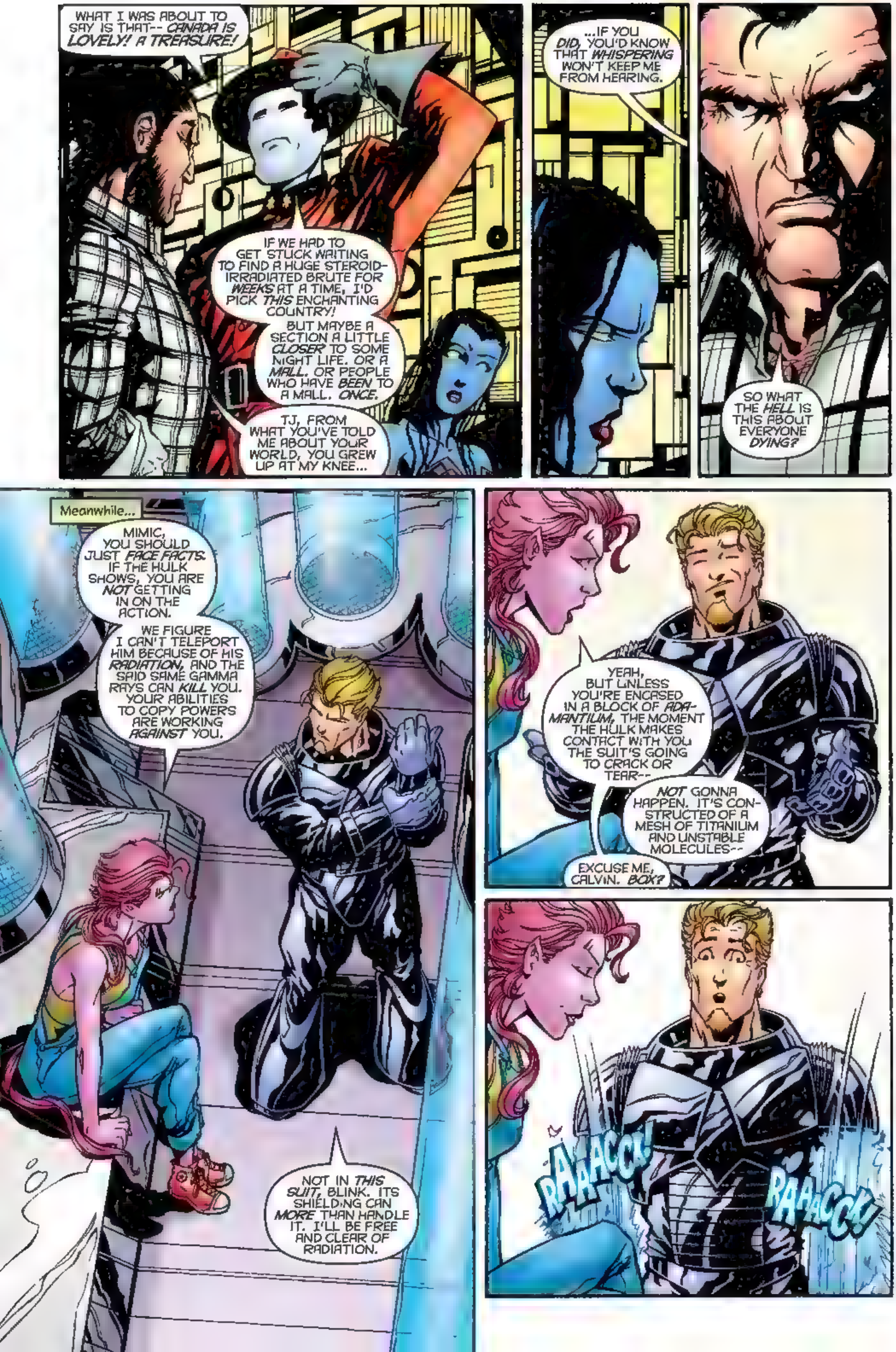
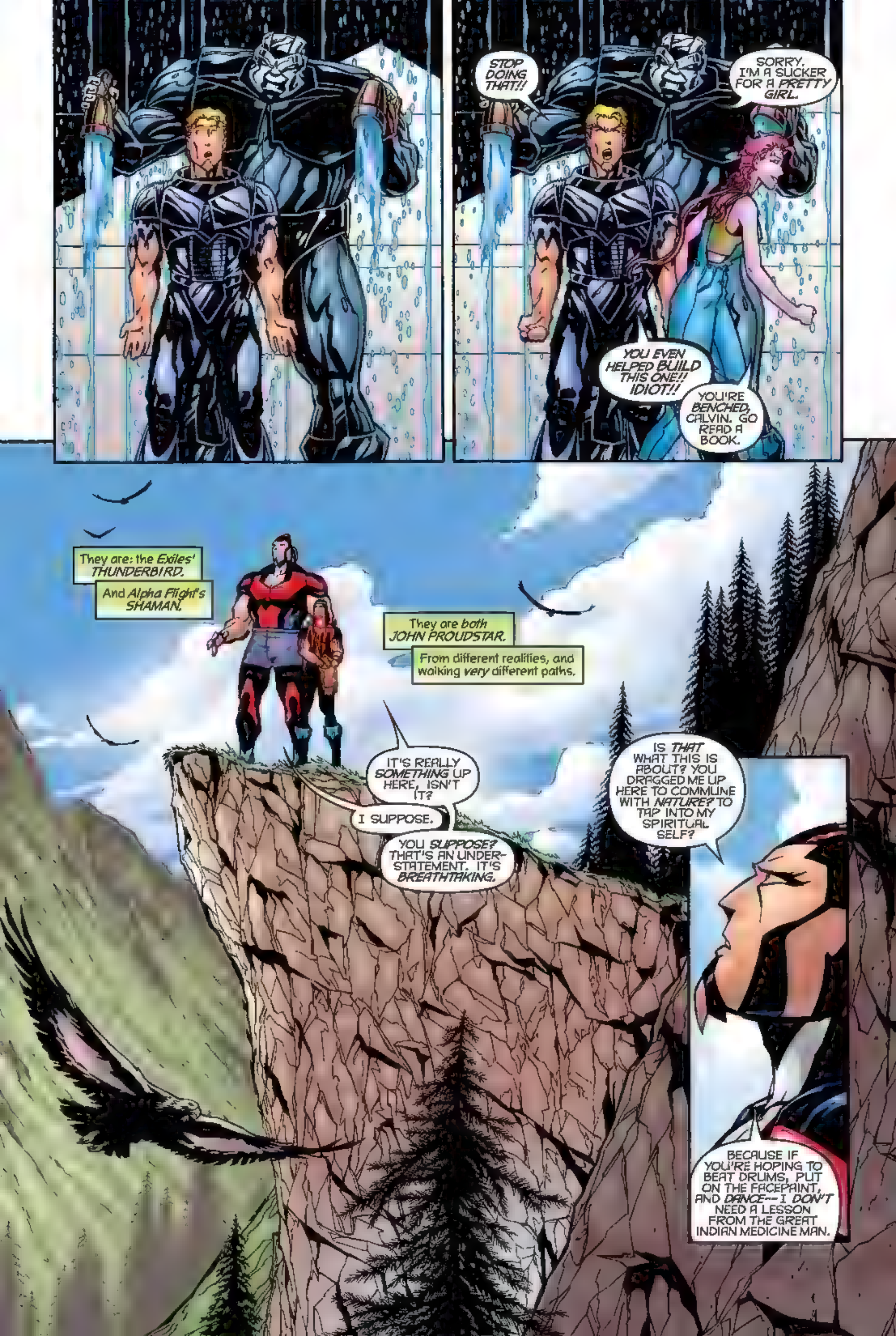
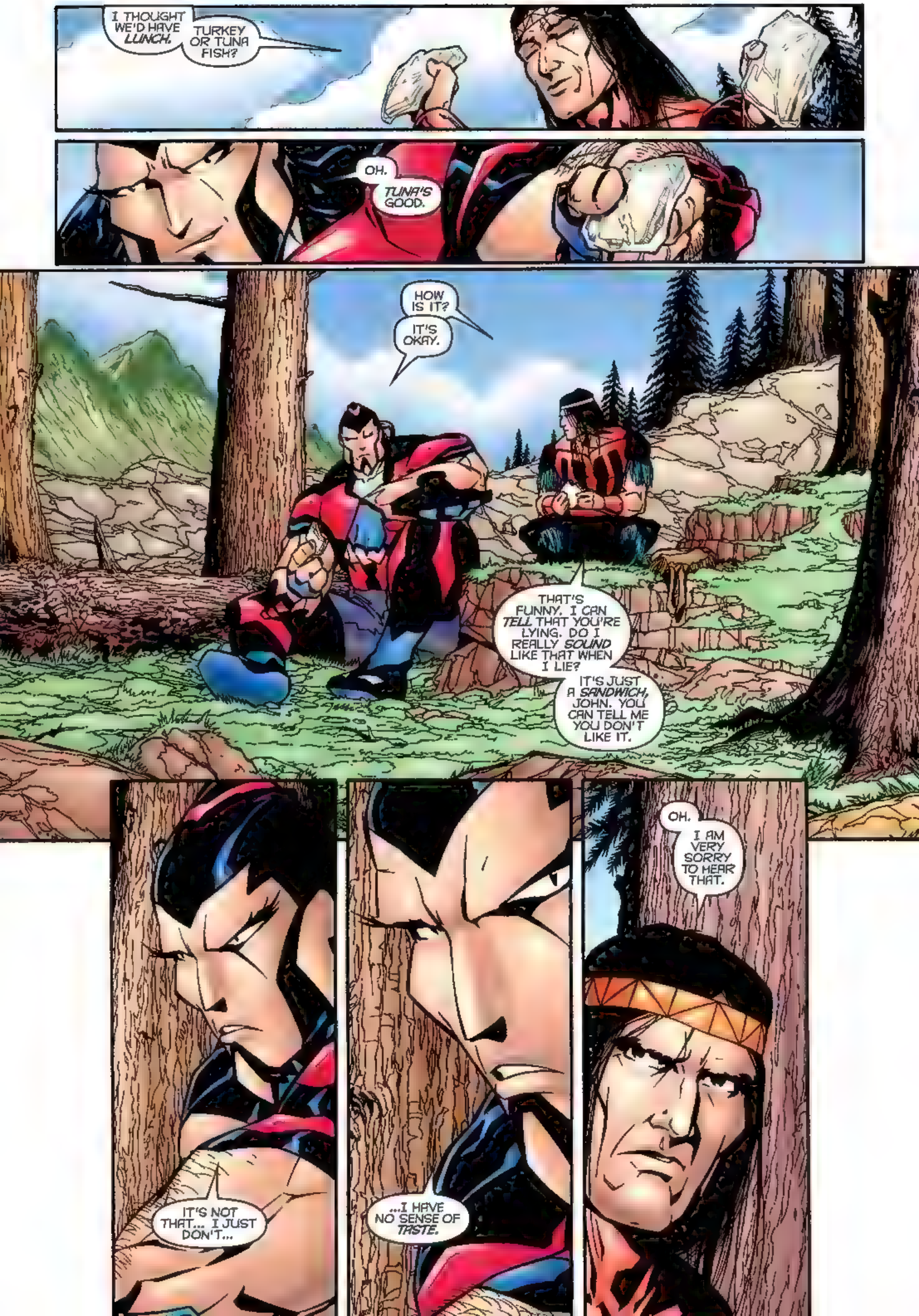
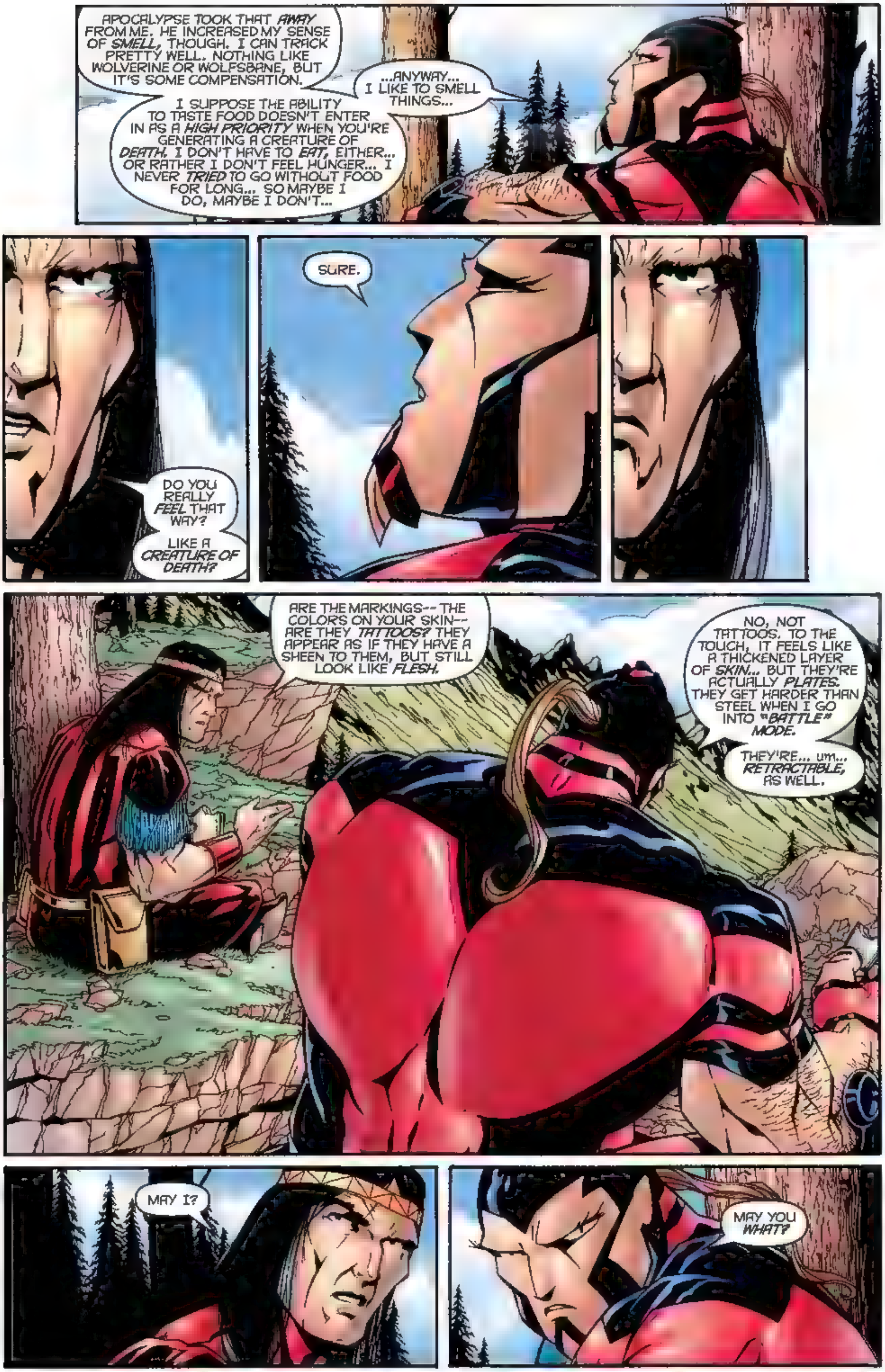
...you'd *think* he'd be easier to *find*.
UP NORTH AND IN THE GREEN
PART 2 OF 2
GOD, I'M BORED. BORED, BORED, BORED, BORED, *BORED*...
UH-OH... MAN *OVER-BORED*...
A PUN. *AWFUL.*
YES, MORPH, IT REALLY ISN'T UP TO *YOUR* STANDARDS OF FLATULENCE AND BOOGER-JOKES NOW, IS IT?
SCRIBE: JUDD WINICK GUEST PENCILS: J. CALAFIORE INKS: ERIC CANNON w/ McKENNA
COLORS: TRANSPARENCY DIGITAL LETTERS: SHARPEFONT'S PAUL TUTRONE ASSISTANT EDITOR: MIKE RAICHT
INCREDIBLE: MIKE MARTS RAMPAGING: JOE QUESADA SAVAGE: BILL JEMAS
YOU *WOUND* ME, NOCTURNE.
WHEN FASHIONING A JAPE, *NE'ER* DO I DESCEND TO BRUTISH COMPORTMENT. QUITE ANTITHETICALLY, I CONSTRUCT MY RAILLERY WITH A GENTLEMAN'S CONDUCT *EVER* IN MIND.
Uh-huh. I think you used "antithetically" in the wrong tense, Oscar Wilde.
I *CARE.*
LOOK-- MY HEAD'S A *PIG'S BUTT!*
QUIT COMPLAINING. AT LEAST WE GOT THE *DAY* WATCH ON "MONITOR DUTY"...
...THE ALPHA FLIGHTERS HAVE BEEN PRETTY COOL ABOUT NOT SADDLING US EXILES WITH *TOO MUCH* OF THE RESPONSIBILITIES.
THIS WHOLE "PROJECT GOLIATH" SEARCH-FOR-THE-HULK THING COULD BE *A LOT* WORSE.

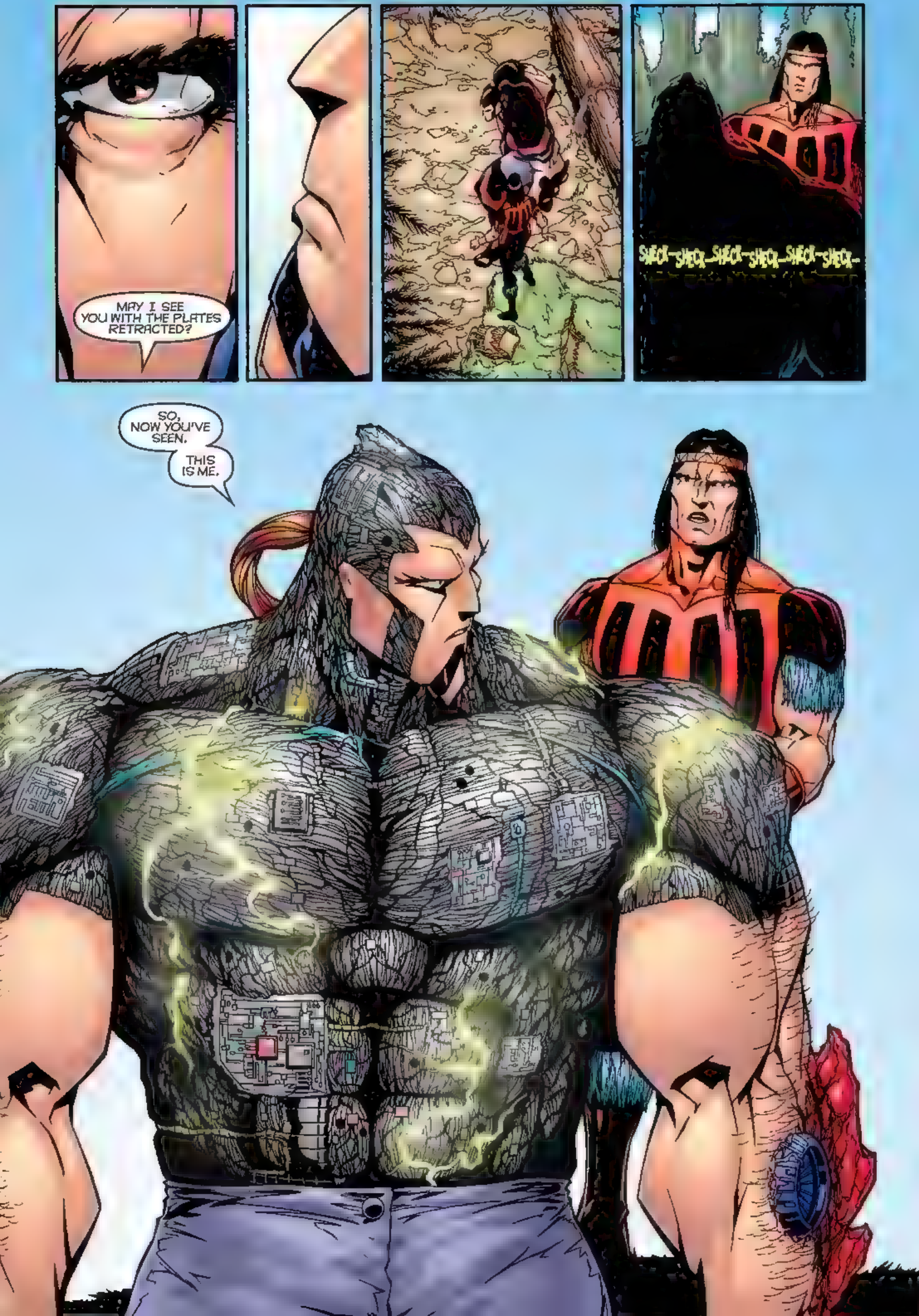

HOW?!
THAT WE *NOT* FIND THE HULK ANY *LESS?* IT'S A *NULL SET*, BABY!
TWO WEEKS! *TWO! WEEKS!* AND NEITHER HIDE NOR GREEN HAIR OF THE EMERALD GIGANTOR!
WHAT DO WE GET TO DO?! WATCH SATELLITE SHOTS OF CANADA-- READ GAMMA RADIATION TRACKING SENSORS! *FUN! FUN! FUN!*
I KNOW. BUT WE DON'T HAVE ANY CHOICE, REALLY. THE *TALLUS* SAID THAT WE'RE SUPPOSED TO HELP ALPHA FLIGHT CAPTURE THE HULK...
...we *don't* and they're all supposed to *die.*
STILL-- WE SHOULDN'T HAVE TO CARRY THEIR WATER, MAN. WE OFFER TO HELP AND SUDDENLY *WE'RE* DOING THE DISHES. MONITOR DUTY *SUCKS.*
AND CANADA, MAN, *CANADA--*
WHAT? WHY ARE YOU *LOOKING* AT ME LIKE THAT?
WOLVERINE IS STANDING RIGHT BEHIND ME?
WOLVERINE IS STANDING RIGHT BEHIND YOU.

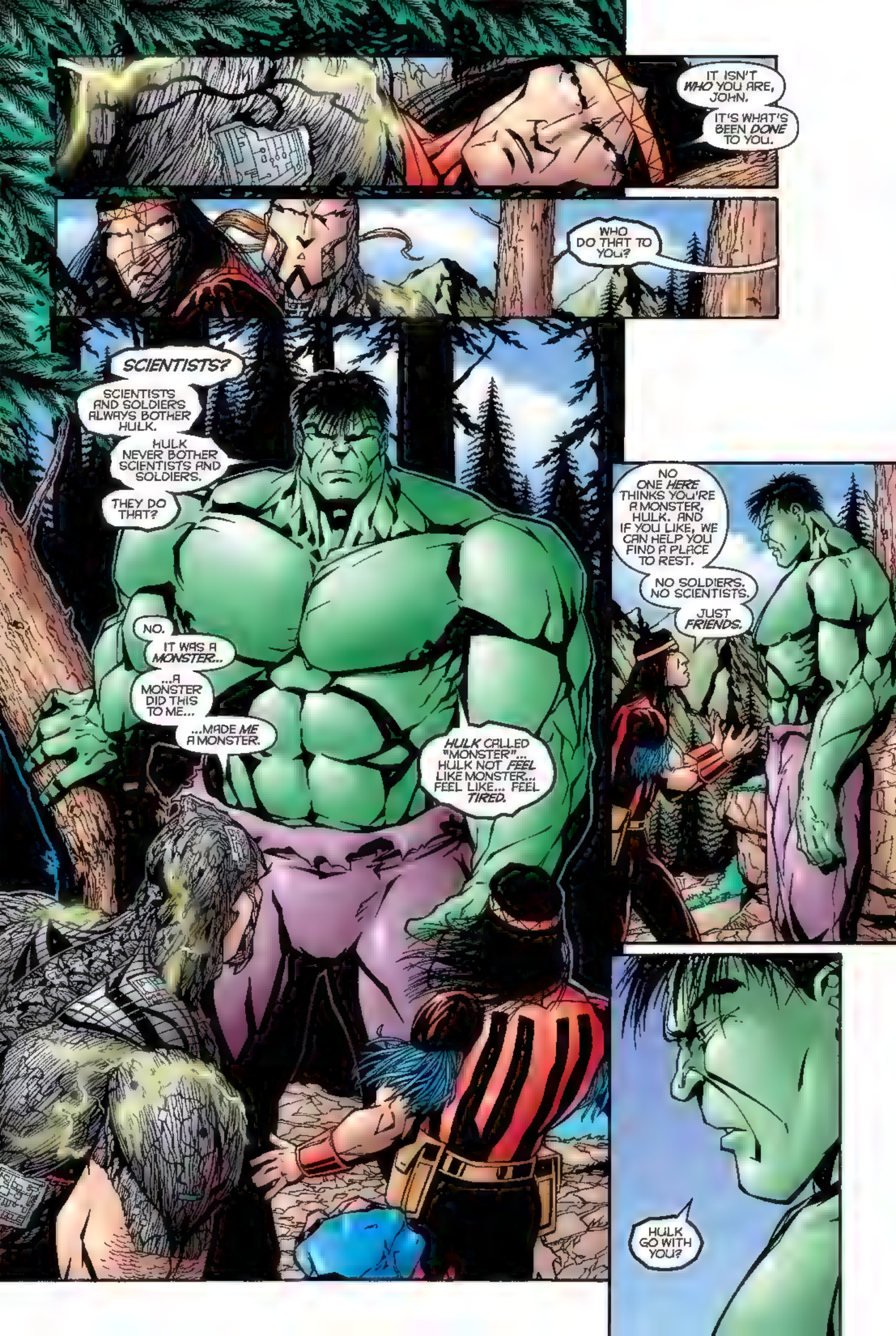

WHAT I WAS ABOUT TO SAY IS THAT-- *CANADA IS LOVELY! A TREASURE!*
IF WE HAD TO GET STUCK WAITING TO FIND A HUGE STEROID-IRRADIATED BRUTE FOR *WEEKS* AT A TIME, I'D PICK *THIS* ENCHANTING COUNTRY!
BUT MAYBE A SECTION A LITTLE *CLOSER* TO SOME NIGHT LIFE. OR A *MALL*. OR PEOPLE WHO HAVE *BEEN* TO A MALL. *ONCE*.
TJ, FROM WHAT YOU'VE TOLD ME ABOUT YOUR WORLD, YOU GREW UP AT MY KNEE...
...IF YOU *DID*, YOU'D KNOW THAT *WHISPERING* WON'T KEEP ME FROM HEARING.
SO WHAT THE *HELL* IS THIS ABOUT EVERYONE *DYING?*
Meanwhile...
MIMIC, YOU SHOULD JUST *FACE FACTS*. IF THE HULK SHOWS, YOU ARE *NOT* GETTING IN ON THE ACTION.
WE FIGURE I CAN'T TELEPORT HIM BECAUSE OF HIS *RADIATION*, AND THE SAID SAME GAMMA RAYS CAN *KILL* YOU. YOUR ABILITIES TO COPY POWERS ARE WORKING *AGAINST* YOU.
NOT IN *THIS SUIT*, BLINK. ITS SHIELDING CAN *MORE* THAN HANDLE IT. I'LL BE FREE AND CLEAR OF RADIATION.
YEAH, BUT UNLESS YOU'RE ENCASED IN A BLOCK OF *ADAMANTIUM*, THE MOMENT THE HULK MAKES CONTACT WITH YOU THE SUIT'S GOING TO CRACK OR TEAR--
NOT GONNA HAPPEN. IT'S CONSTRUCTED OF A MESH OF TITANIUM AND UNSTABLE MOLECULES--
EXCUSE ME, CALVIN. *BOX?*
RAAACCK!
RAAACCK!

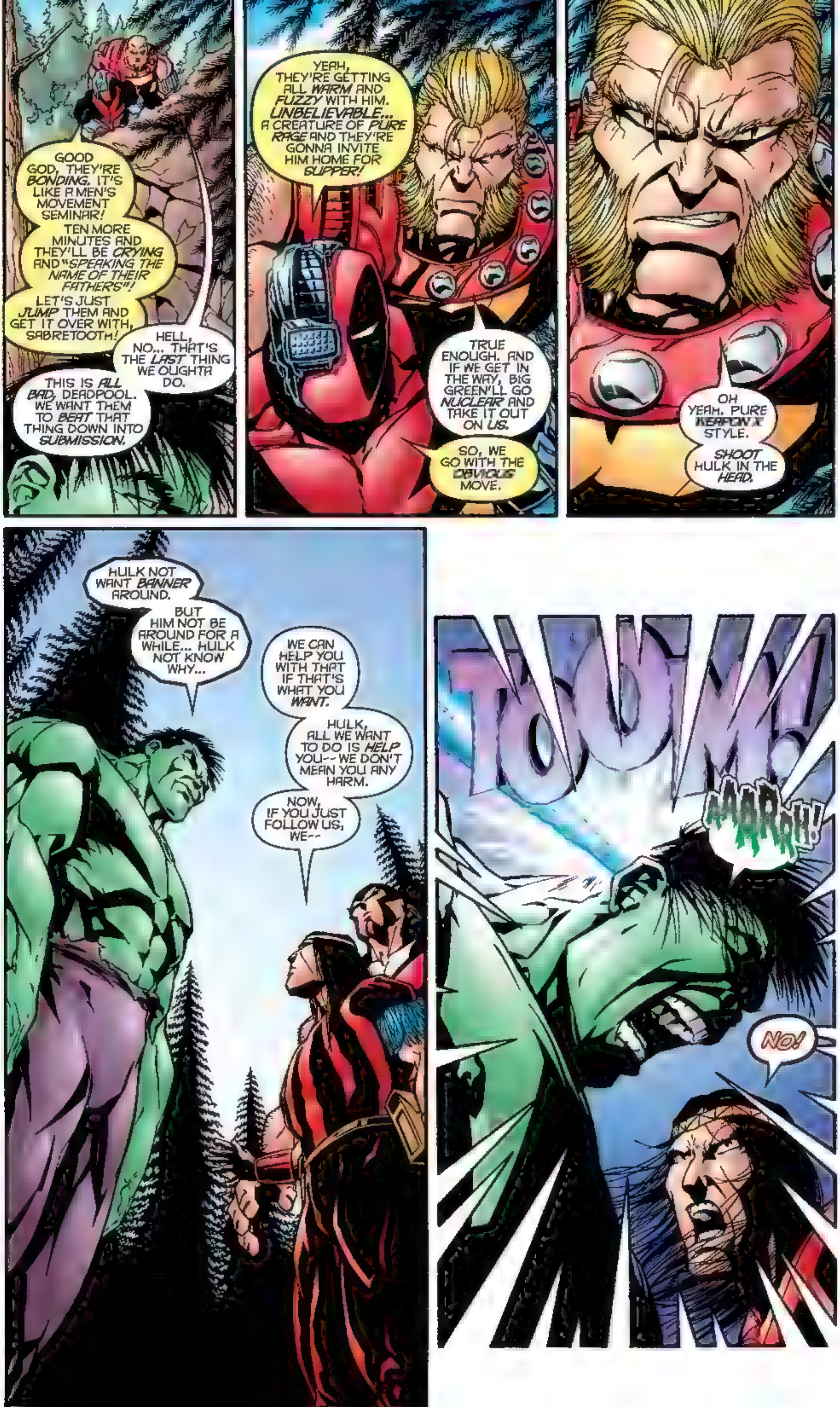

STOP DOING THAT!!
SORRY. I'M A SUCKER FOR A PRETTY GIRL.
YOU EVEN HELPED BUILD THIS ONE!! IDIOT!!
YOU'RE BENCHED, CALVIN. GO READ A BOOK.
They are: the Exiles' THUNDERBIRD.
And Alpha Flight's SHAMAN.
They are both JOHN PROUDSTAR.
From different realities, and walking very different paths.
IT'S REALLY SOMETHING UP HERE, ISN'T IT?
I SUPPOSE.
YOU SUPPOSE? THAT'S AN UNDERSTATEMENT. IT'S BREATHTAKING.
IS THAT WHAT THIS IS ABOUT? YOU DRAGGED ME UP HERE TO COMMUNE WITH NATURE? TO TAP INTO MY SPIRITUAL SELF?
BECAUSE IF YOU'RE HOPING TO BEAT DRUMS, PUT ON THE FACEPAINT, AND DANCE-- I DON'T NEED A LESSON FROM THE GREAT INDIAN MEDICINE MAN.

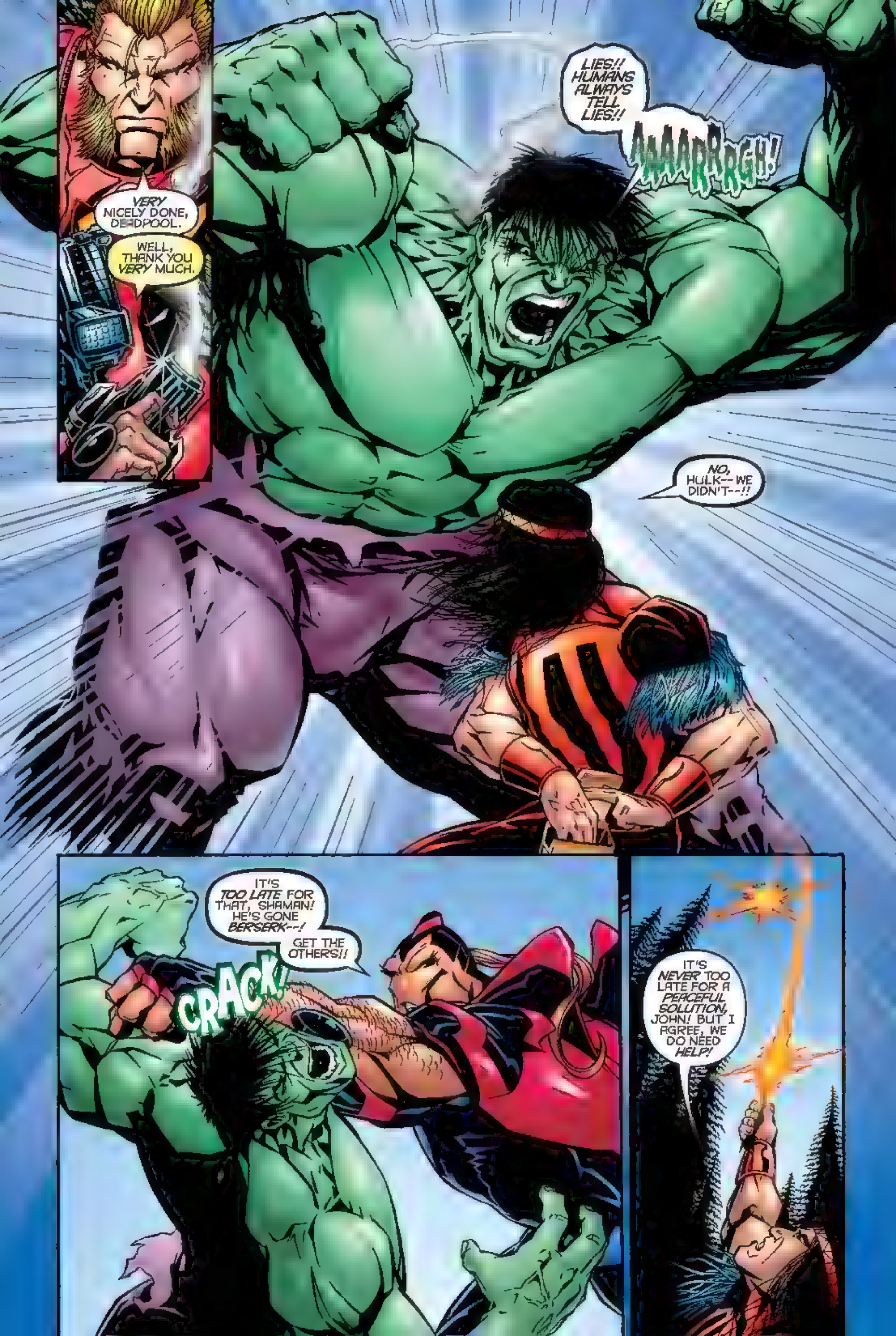

I THOUGHT WE'D HAVE *LUNCH.*
TURKEY OR TUNA FISH?
OH.
TUNA'S GOOD.
HOW IS IT?
IT'S OKAY.
THAT'S FUNNY. I CAN *TELL* THAT YOU'RE LYING. DO I REALLY *SOUND* LIKE THAT WHEN I LIE?
IT'S JUST A *SANDWICH,* JOHN. YOU CAN TELL ME YOU DON'T LIKE IT.
IT'S NOT THAT... I JUST DON'T...
...I HAVE NO SENSE OF *TASTE.*
OH.
I AM VERY SORRY TO HEAR THAT.

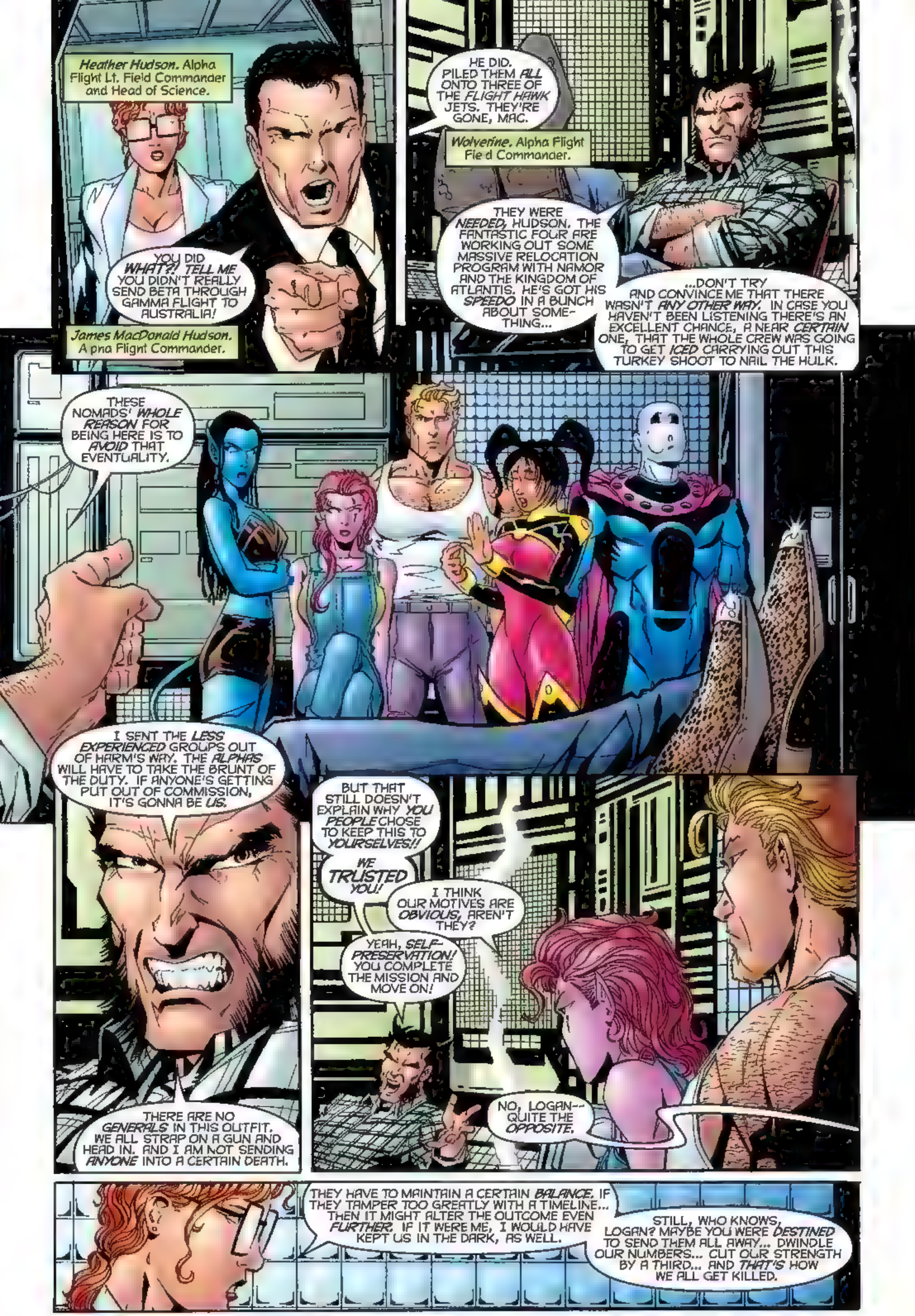

APOCALYPSE TOOK THAT *AWAY* FROM ME. HE INCREASED MY SENSE OF *SMELL*, THOUGH. I CAN TRACK PRETTY WELL. NOTHING LIKE WOLVERINE OR WOLFSBANE, BUT IT'S SOME COMPENSATION.
I SUPPOSE THE ABILITY TO TASTE FOOD DOESN'T ENTER IN AS A *HIGH PRIORITY* WHEN YOU'RE GENERATING A CREATURE OF *DEATH*. I DON'T HAVE TO *EAT*, EITHER... OR RATHER I DON'T FEEL HUNGER... I NEVER *TRIED* TO GO WITHOUT FOOD FOR LONG... SO MAYBE I DO, MAYBE I DON'T...
...ANYWAY... I LIKE TO SMELL THINGS...
DO YOU REALLY *FEEL* THAT WAY?
LIKE A *CREATURE OF DEATH?*
SURE.
ARE THE MARKINGS-- THE COLORS ON YOUR SKIN-- ARE THEY *TATTOOS?* THEY APPEAR AS IF THEY HAVE A SHEEN TO THEM, BUT STILL LOOK LIKE *FLESH*.
NO, NOT TATTOOS. TO THE TOUCH, IT FEELS LIKE A THICKENED LAYER OF *SKIN*... BUT THEY'RE ACTUALLY *PLATES*. THEY GET HARDER THAN STEEL WHEN I GO INTO *"BATTLE" MODE*.
THEY'RE... um... *RETRACTABLE,* AS WELL.
MAY I?
MAY YOU *WHAT?*

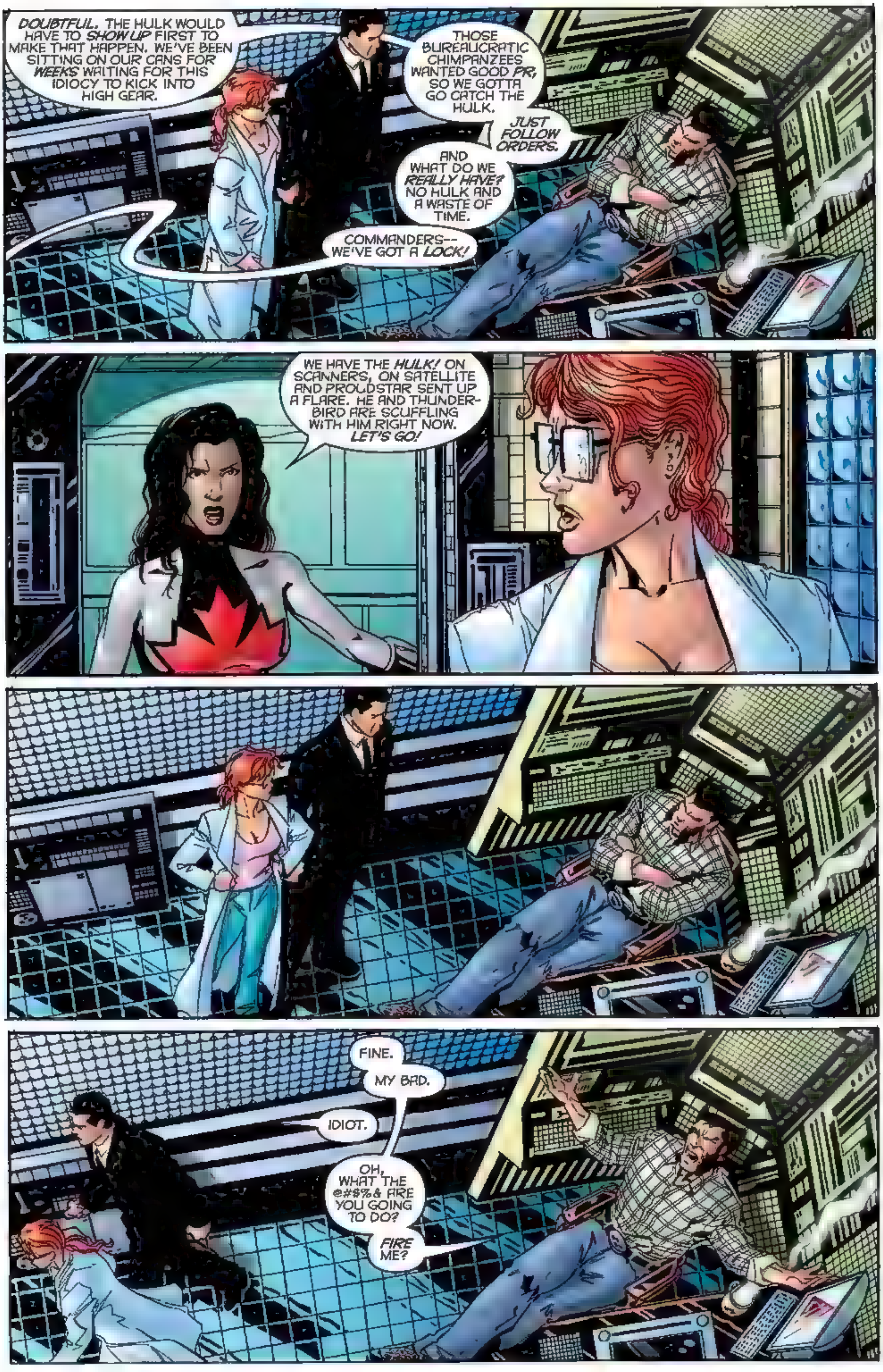

MAY I SEE YOU WITH THE PLATES RETRACTED?
SHECK-SHECK-SHECK-SHECK-SHECK-SHECK-
SO, NOW YOU'VE SEEN.
THIS IS ME.

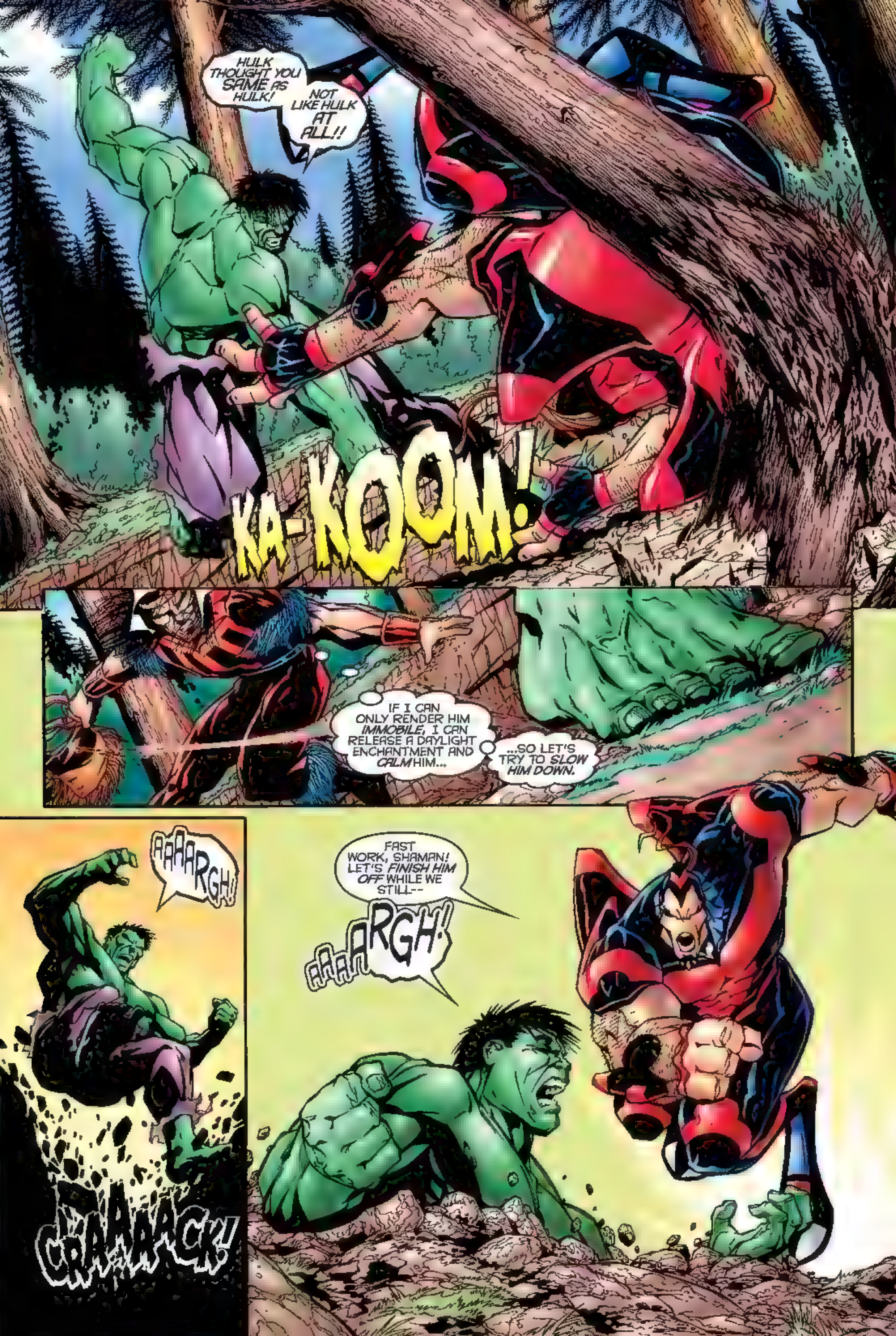

IT ISN'T *WHO* YOU ARE, JOHN.
IT'S WHAT'S BEEN *DONE* TO YOU.
WHO DO THAT TO YOU?
SCIENTISTS?
SCIENTISTS AND SOLDIERS ALWAYS BOTHER HULK.
HULK NEVER BOTHER SCIENTISTS AND SOLDIERS.
THEY DO THAT?
NO.
IT WAS A *MONSTER*...
...A MONSTER DID THIS TO ME...
...MADE *ME* A MONSTER.
HULK CALLED "MONSTER"... HULK NOT *FEEL* LIKE MONSTER... FEEL LIKE... FEEL *TIRED.*
NO ONE *HERE* THINKS YOU'RE A MONSTER, HULK. AND IF YOU LIKE, WE CAN HELP YOU FIND A PLACE TO REST.
NO SOLDIERS. NO SCIENTISTS.
JUST *FRIENDS.*
HULK GO WITH YOU?

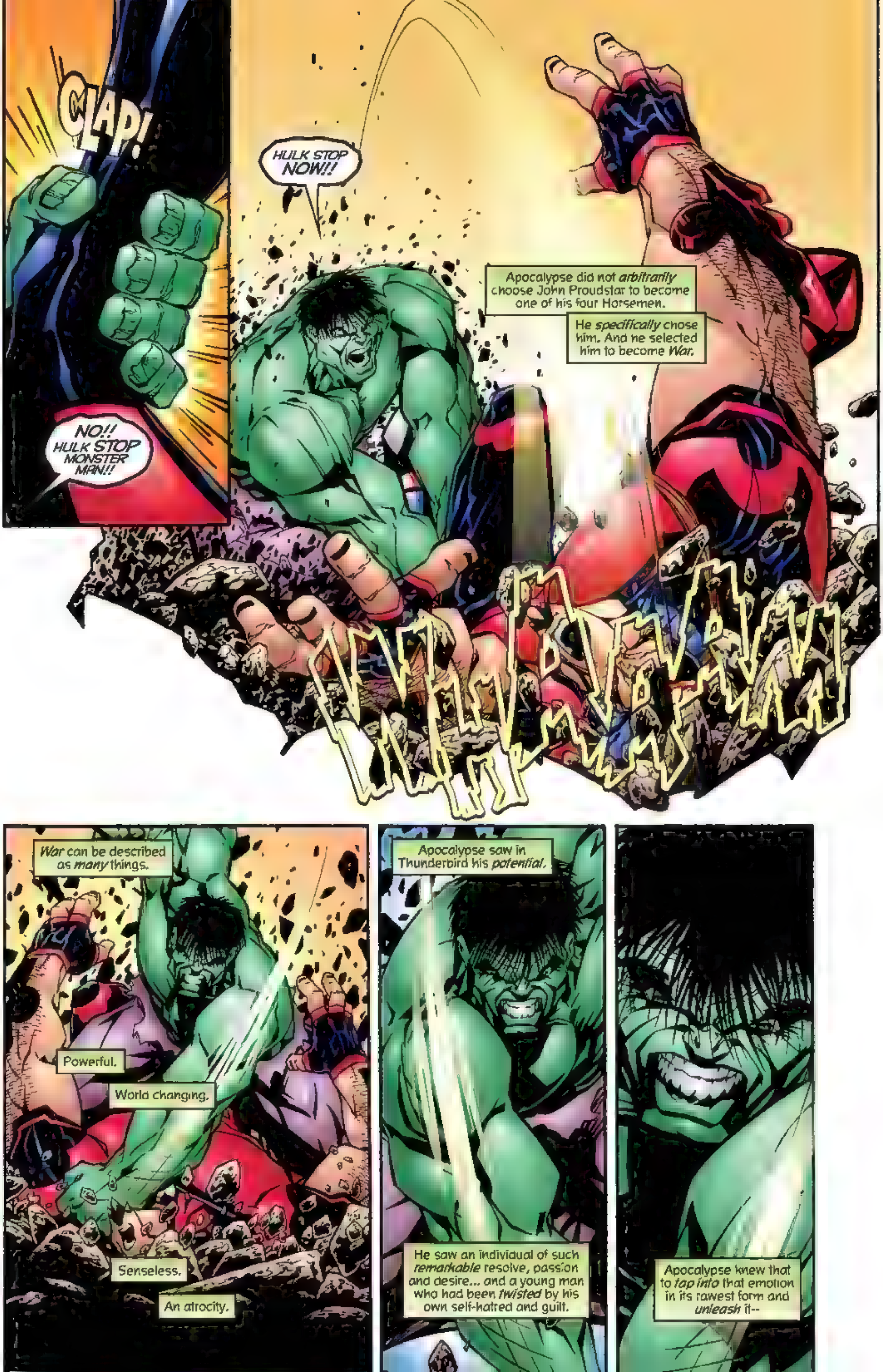

GOOD GOD, THEY'RE BONDING. IT'S LIKE A MEN'S MOVEMENT SEMINAR!
TEN MORE MINUTES AND THEY'LL BE CRYING AND "SPEAKING THE NAME OF THEIR FATHERS"!
LET'S JUST JUMP THEM AND GET IT OVER WITH, SABRETOOTH!
HELL, NO... THAT'S THE LAST THING WE OUGHTA DO.
THIS IS ALL BAD, DEADPOOL. WE WANT THEM TO BEAT THAT THING DOWN INTO SUBMISSION.
YEAH, THEY'RE GETTING ALL WARM AND FUZZY WITH HIM. UNBELIEVABLE... A CREATURE OF PURE RAGE AND THEY'RE GONNA INVITE HIM HOME FOR SUPPER!
TRUE ENOUGH. AND IF WE GET IN THE WAY, BIG GREEN'LL GO NUCLEAR AND TAKE IT OUT ON US.
SO, WE GO WITH THE OBVIOUS MOVE.
OH YEAH. PURE WEAPON X STYLE.
SHOOT HULK IN THE HEAD.
HULK NOT WANT BANNER AROUND.
BUT HIM NOT BE AROUND FOR A WHILE... HULK NOT KNOW WHY...
WE CAN HELP YOU WITH THAT IF THAT'S WHAT YOU WANT.
HULK, ALL WE WANT TO DO IS HELP YOU-- WE DON'T MEAN YOU ANY HARM.
NOW, IF YOU JUST FOLLOW US, WE--
TOOM!
AAARGH!
NO!

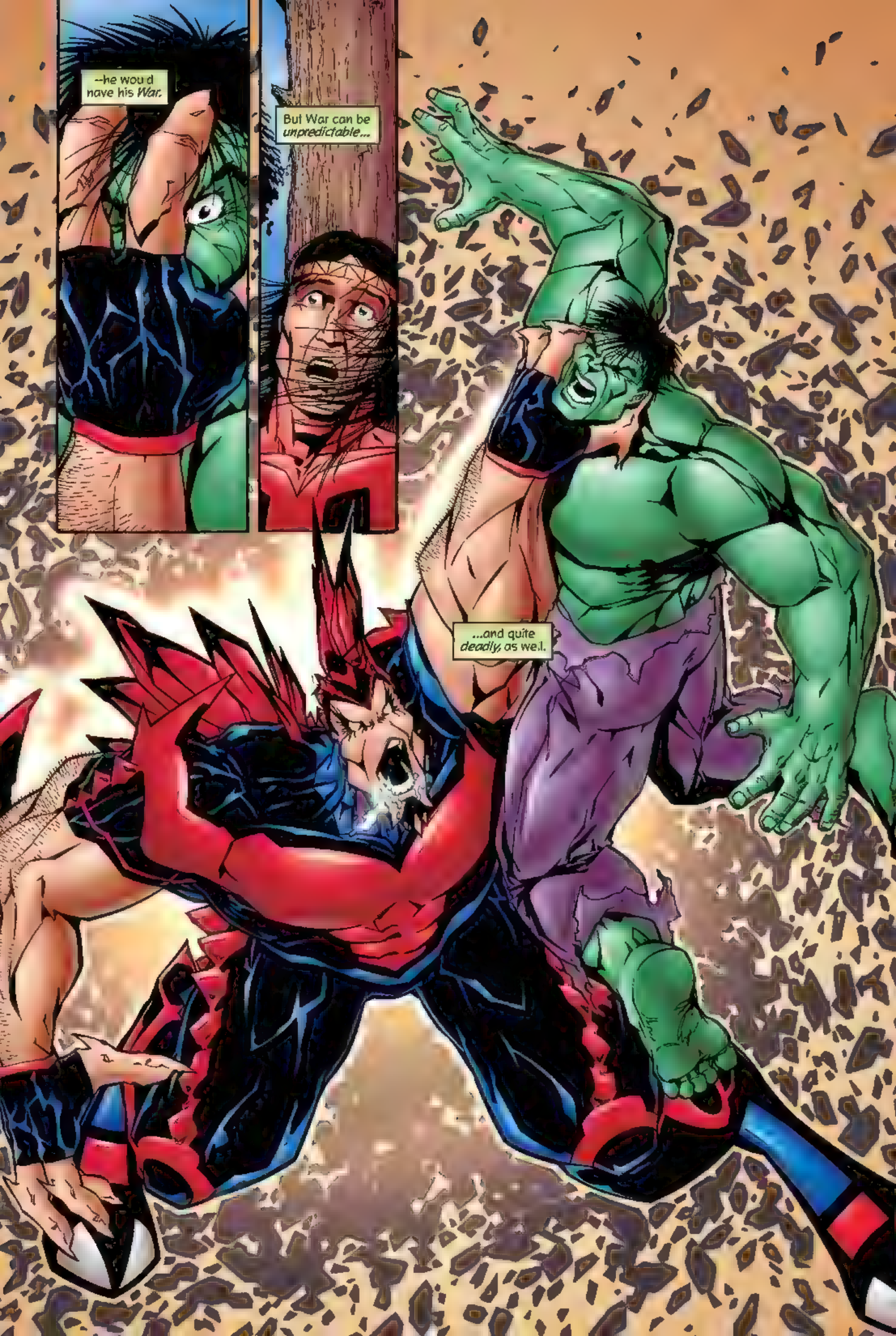

VERY NICELY DONE, DEADPOOL.
WELL, THANK YOU VERY MUCH.
LIES!! HUMANS ALWAYS TELL LIES!!
AAAARRRGH!
NO, HULK-- WE DIDN'T--!!
IT'S TOO LATE FOR THAT, SHAMAN! HE'S GONE BERSERK--!
GET THE OTHERS!!
CRACK!
IT'S NEVER TOO LATE FOR A PEACEFUL SOLUTION, JOHN! BUT I AGREE, WE DO NEED HELP!

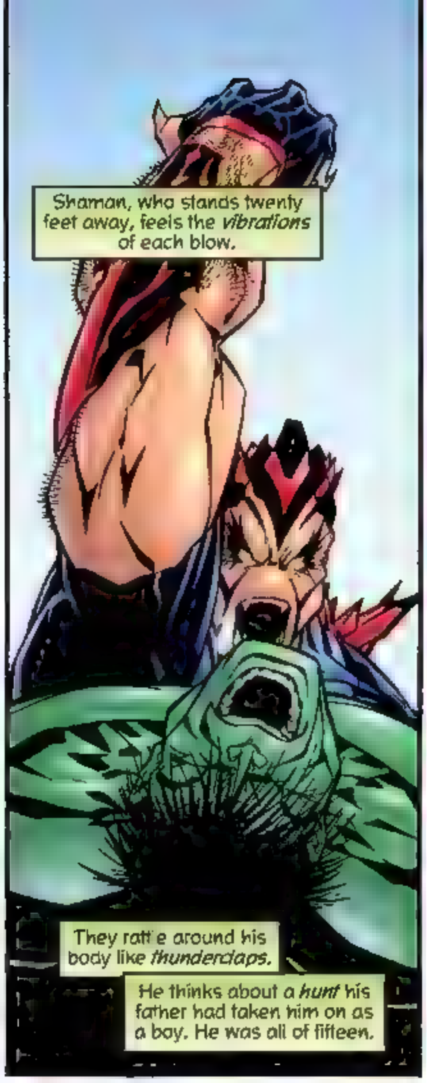

Heather Hudson. Alpha Flight Lt. Field Commander and Head of Science.
YOU DID WHAT?! TELL ME YOU DIDN'T REALLY SEND BETA THROUGH GAMMA FLIGHT TO AUSTRALIA!
James MacDonald Hudson. Alpha Flight Commander.
HE DID. PILED THEM ALL ONTO THREE OF THE FLIGHT HAWK JETS. THEY'RE GONE, MAC.
Wolverine. Alpha Flight Field Commander.
THEY WERE NEEDED, HUDSON. THE FANTASTIC FOUR ARE WORKING OUT SOME MASSIVE RELOCATION PROGRAM WITH NAMOR AND THE KINGDOM OF ATLANTIS. HE'S GOT HIS SPEEDO IN A BUNCH ABOUT SOMETHING...
...DON'T TRY AND CONVINCE ME THAT THERE WASN'T ANY OTHER WAY. IN CASE YOU HAVEN'T BEEN LISTENING THERE'S AN EXCELLENT CHANCE, A NEAR CERTAIN ONE, THAT THE WHOLE CREW WAS GOING TO GET ICED CARRYING OUT THIS TURKEY SHOOT TO NAIL THE HULK.
THESE NOMADS' WHOLE REASON FOR BEING HERE IS TO AVOID THAT EVENTUALITY.
I SENT THE LESS EXPERIENCED GROUPS OUT OF HARM'S WAY. THE ALPHAS WILL HAVE TO TAKE THE BRUNT OF THE DUTY. IF ANYONE'S GETTING PUT OUT OF COMMISSION, IT'S GONNA BE US.
THERE ARE NO GENERALS IN THIS OUTFIT. WE ALL STRAP ON A GUN AND HEAD IN. AND I AM NOT SENDING ANYONE INTO A CERTAIN DEATH.
BUT THAT STILL DOESN'T EXPLAIN WHY YOU PEOPLE CHOSE TO KEEP THIS TO YOURSELVES!!
WE TRUSTED YOU!
I THINK OUR MOTIVES ARE OBVIOUS, AREN'T THEY?
YEAH, SELF-PRESERVATION! YOU COMPLETE THE MISSION AND MOVE ON!
NO, LOGAN-- QUITE THE OPPOSITE.
THEY HAVE TO MAINTAIN A CERTAIN BALANCE. IF THEY TAMPER TOO GREATLY WITH A TIMELINE... THEN IT MIGHT ALTER THE OUTCOME EVEN FURTHER. IF IT WERE ME, I WOULD HAVE KEPT US IN THE DARK, AS WELL.
STILL, WHO KNOWS, LOGAN? MAYBE YOU WERE DESTINED TO SEND THEM ALL AWAY... DWINDLE OUR NUMBERS... CUT OUR STRENGTH BY A THIRD... AND THAT'S HOW WE ALL GET KILLED.

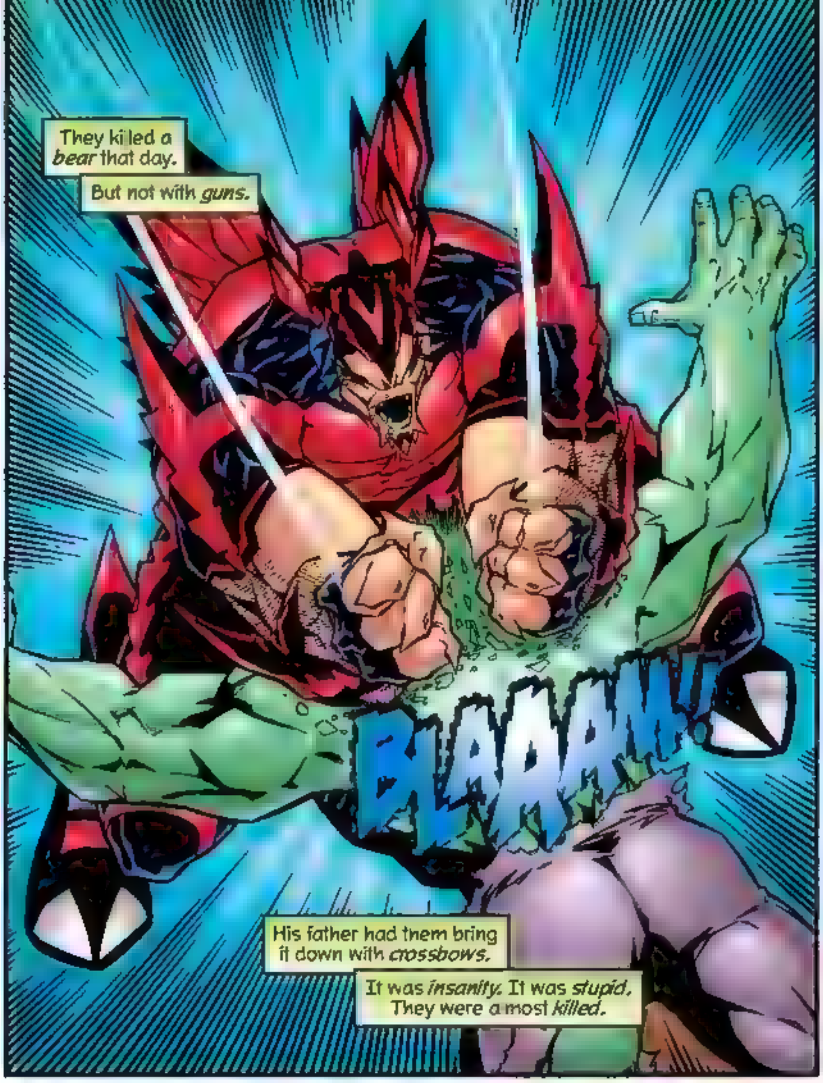

DOUBTFUL. THE HULK WOULD HAVE TO SHOW UP FIRST TO MAKE THAT HAPPEN. WE'VE BEEN SITTING ON OUR CANS FOR WEEKS WAITING FOR THIS IDIOCY TO KICK INTO HIGH GEAR.
THOSE BUREAUCRATIC CHIMPANZEES WANTED GOOD PR, SO WE GOTTA GO CATCH THE HULK.
JUST FOLLOW ORDERS.
AND WHAT DO WE REALLY HAVE? NO HULK AND A WASTE OF TIME.
COMMANDERS-- WE'VE GOT A LOCK!
WE HAVE THE HULK! ON SCANNERS, ON SATELLITE AND PROUDSTAR SENT UP A FLARE. HE AND THUNDERBIRD ARE SCUFFLING WITH HIM RIGHT NOW. LET'S GO!
FINE.
MY BAD.
IDIOT.
OH, WHAT THE @#$%& ARE YOU GOING TO DO?
FIRE ME?

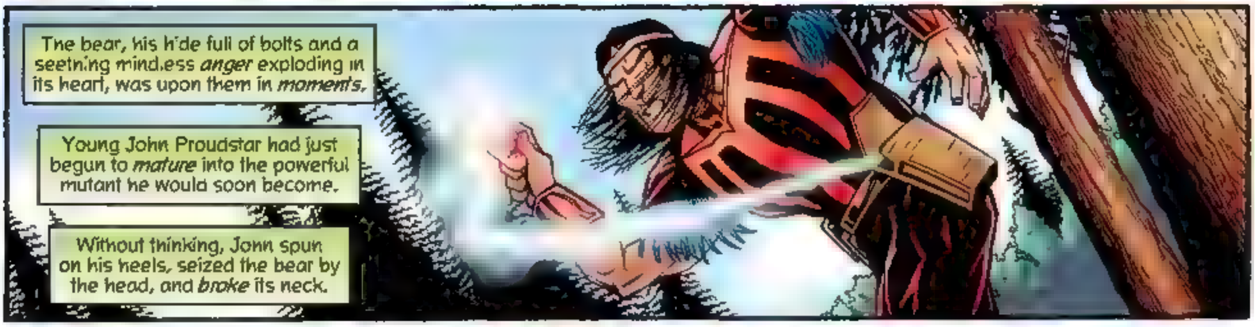

HULK THOUGHT YOU SAME AS HULK!
NOT LIKE HULK AT ALL!!
KA-KOOM!
IF I CAN ONLY RENDER HIM *IMMOBILE*, I CAN RELEASE A DAYLIGHT ENCHANTMENT AND *CALM* HIM...
...SO LET'S TRY TO *SLOW HIM DOWN.*
AAAARGH!
CRAAAACK!
FAST WORK, SHAMAN! LET'S *FINISH HIM OFF* WHILE WE STILL--
AAAARGH!

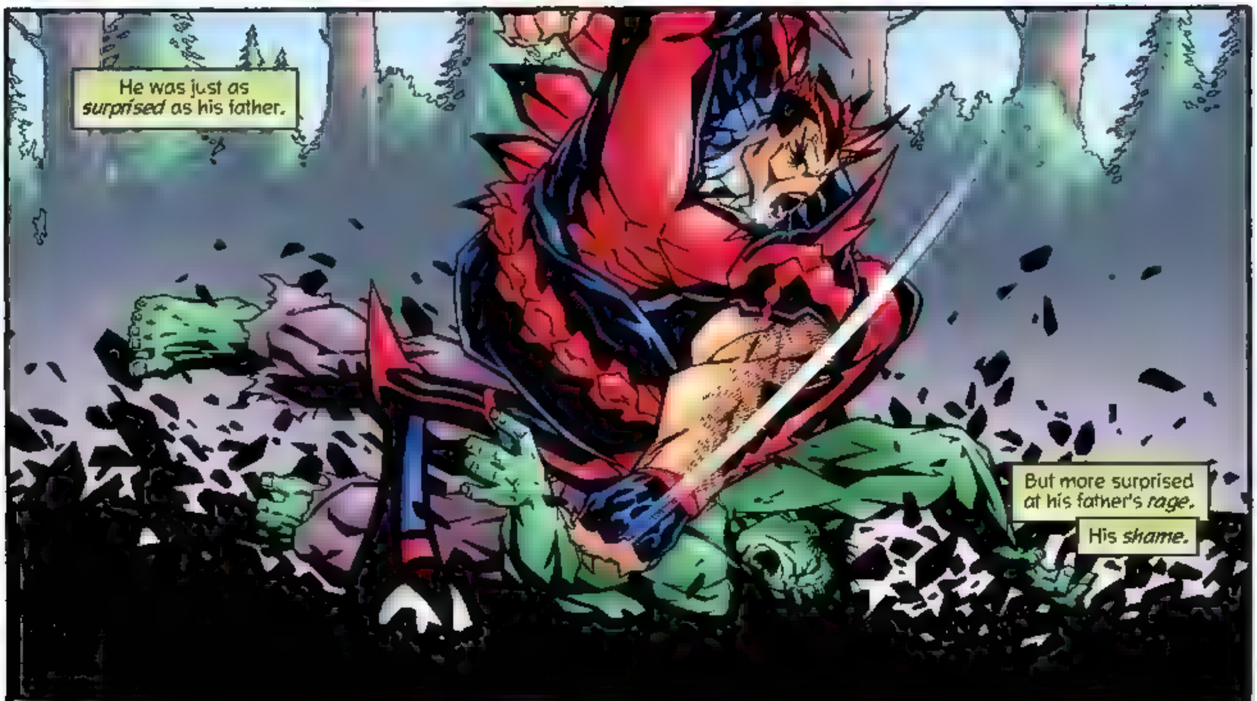

CLAP!
NO!! HULK STOP MONSTER MAN!!
HULK STOP NOW!!
Apocalypse did not *arbitrarily* choose John Proudstar to become one of his four Horsemen.
He *specifically* chose him. And he selected him to become *War.*
War can be described as *many* things.
Powerful.
World changing.
Senseless.
An atrocity.
Apocalypse saw in Thunderbird his *potential.*
He saw an individual of such *remarkable* resolve, passion and desire... and a young man who had been *twisted* by his own self-hatred and guilt.
Apocalypse knew that to *tap into* that emotion in its rawest form and *unleash* it--

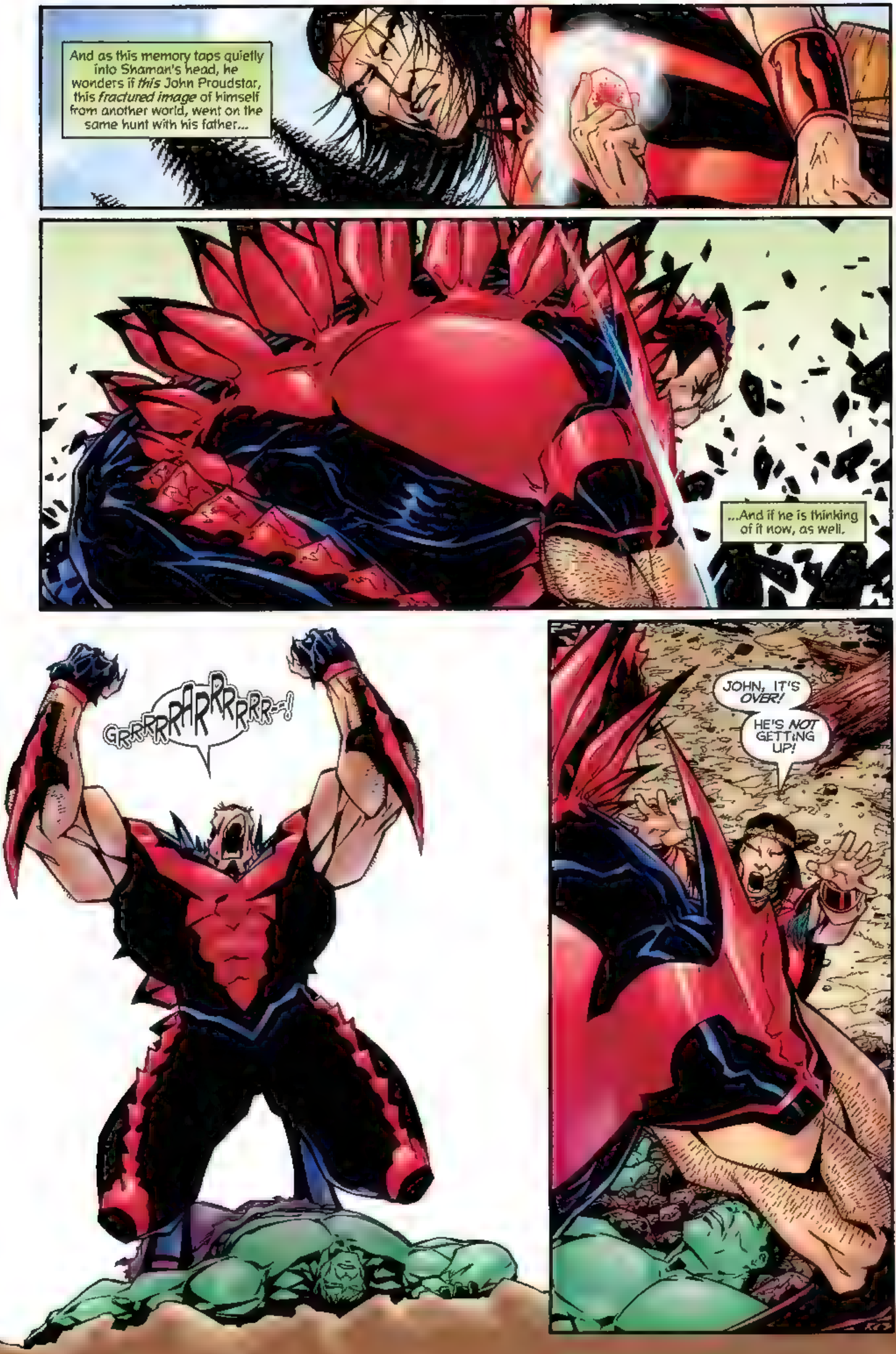

--he would have his *War.*
But War can be *unpredictable...*
...and quite *deadly,* as well.

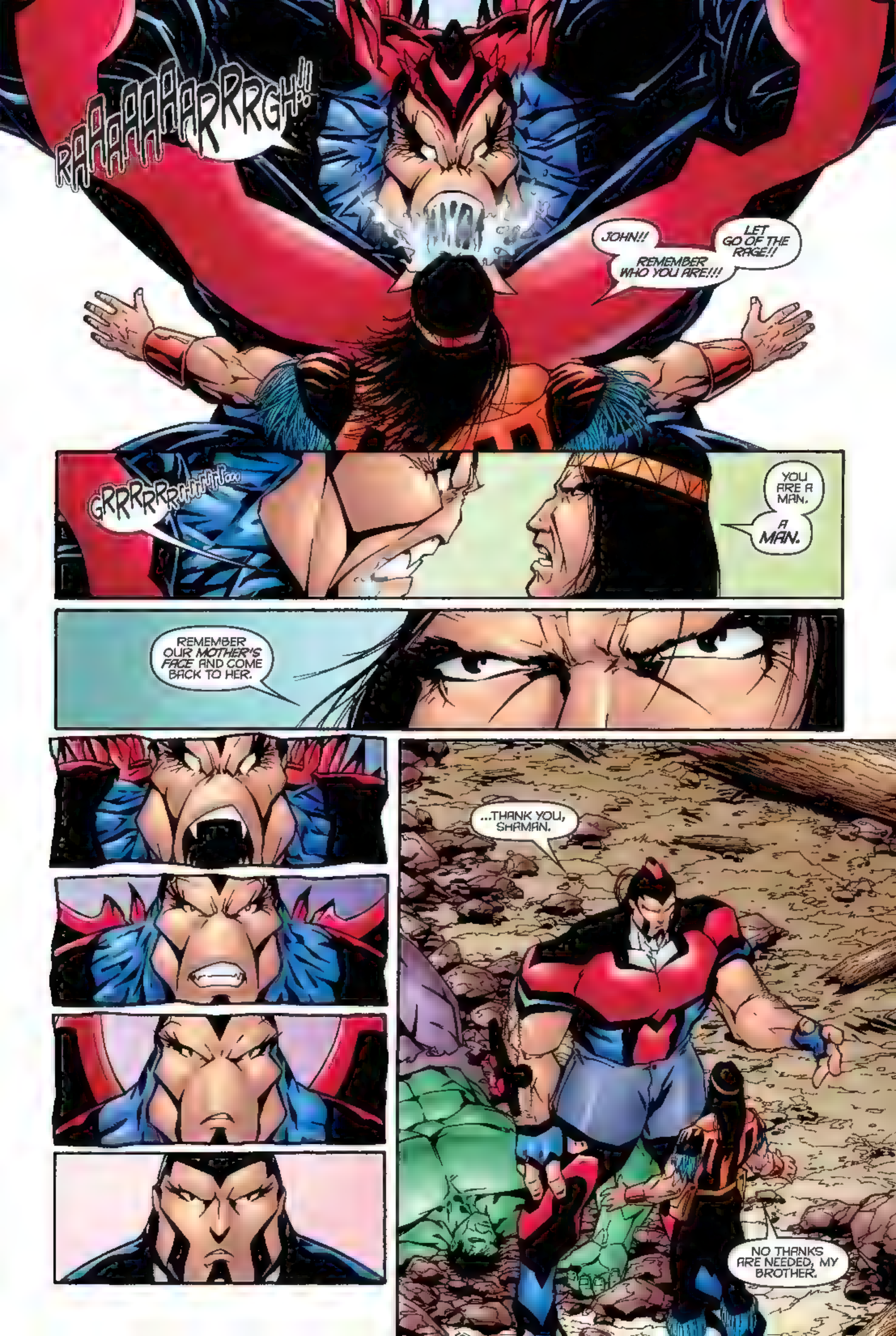

Shaman, who stands twenty feet away, feels the *vibrations* of each blow.
They rattle around his body like *thunderclaps.*
He thinks about a *hunt* his father had taken him on as a boy. He was all of fifteen.

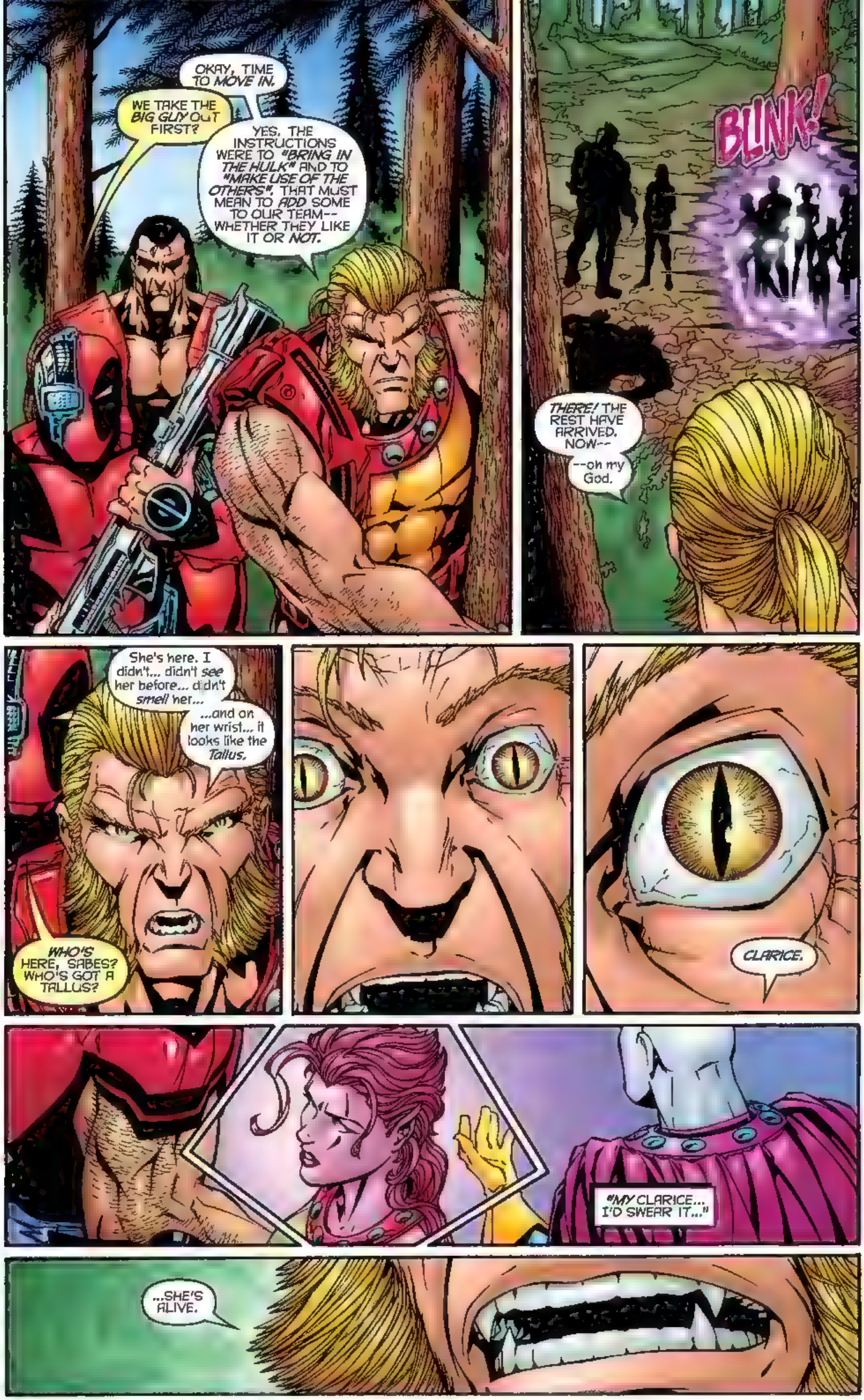

They killed a *bear* that day.
But not with *guns.*
BLAAAM!
His father had them bring it down with *crossbows.*
It was *insanity.* It was *stupid.* They were almost *killed.*

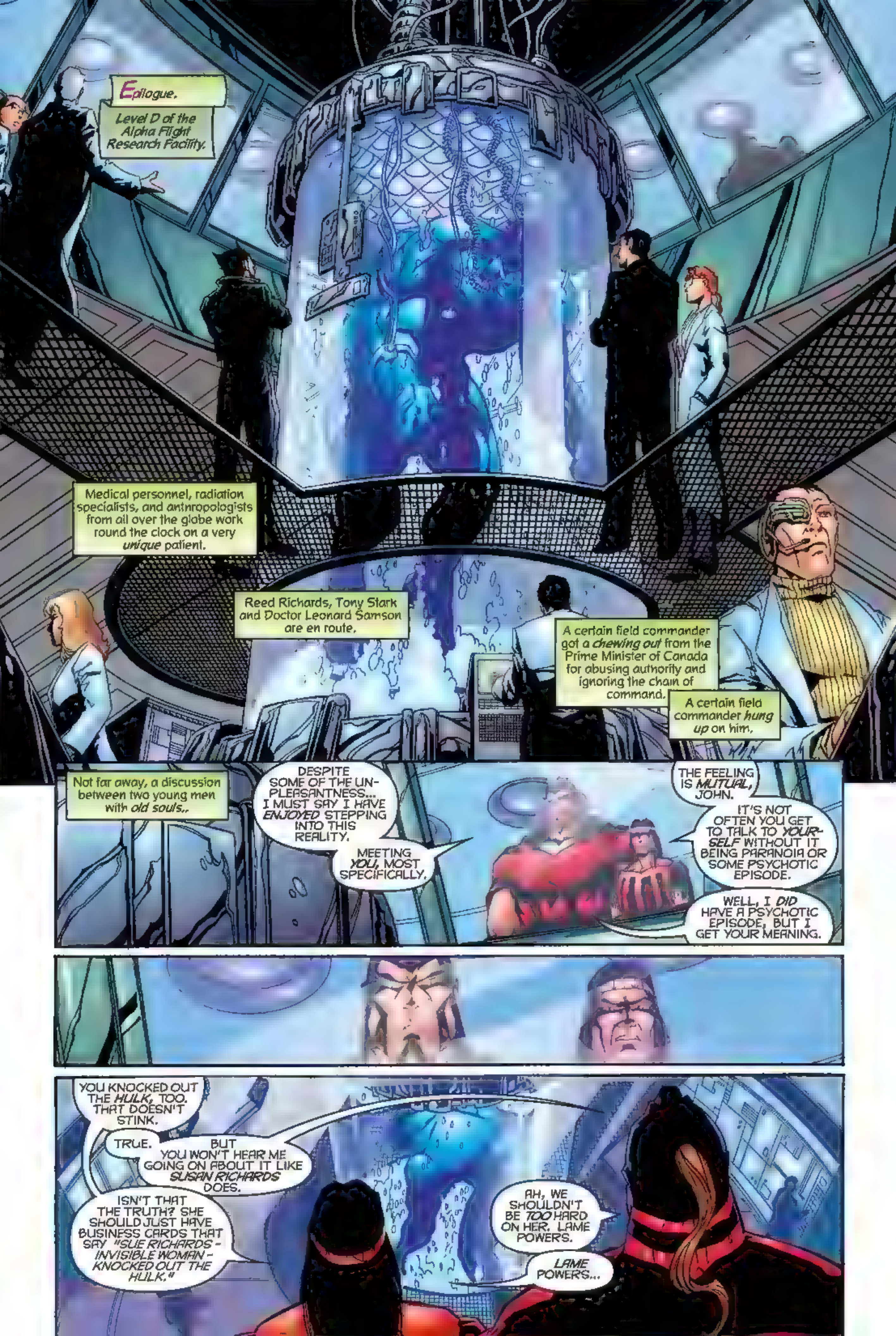

The bear, his hide full of bolts and a seething mindless *anger* exploding in its heart, was upon them in *moments.*
Young John Proudstar had just begun to *mature* into the powerful mutant he would soon become.
Without thinking, John spun on his heels, seized the bear by the head, and *broke* its neck.

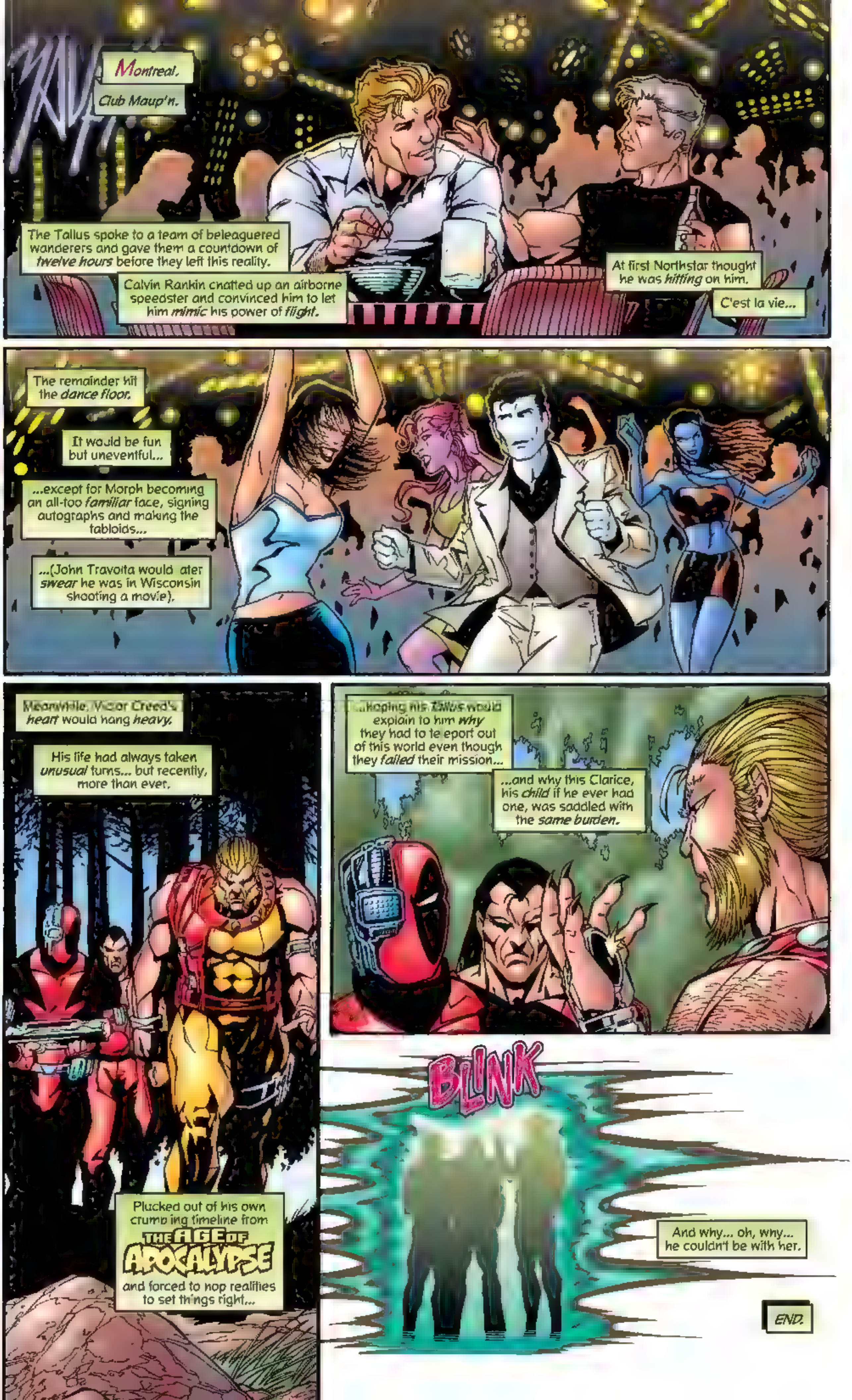

He was just as *surprised* as his father.
But more surprised at his father's *rage.*
His *shame.*


And as this memory taps quietly into Shaman's head, he wonders if *this* John Proudstar, this *fractured image* of himself from another world, went on the same hunt with his father...
...And if he is thinking of it now, as well.
GRRRRRAHRRRRRR--!
JOHN, IT'S *OVER!*
HE'S *NOT* GETTING UP!


RAAAAAAARRRGH!!
JOHN!!
REMEMBER WHO YOU ARE!!!
LET GO OF THE RAGE!!
GRRRRRRrrrrrr...
YOU ARE A MAN.
A *MAN.*
REMEMBER OUR *MOTHER'S FACE* AND COME BACK TO HER.
...THANK YOU, SHAMAN.
NO THANKS ARE NEEDED, MY BROTHER.


OKAY, TIME TO MOVE IN.
WE TAKE THE BIG GUY OUT FIRST?
YES, THE INSTRUCTIONS WERE TO "BRING IN THE HULK" AND TO "MAKE USE OF THE OTHERS". THAT MUST MEAN TO ADD SOME TO OUR TEAM-- WHETHER THEY LIKE IT OR NOT.
BLINK!
THERE! THE REST HAVE ARRIVED. NOW--
--oh my God.
She's here. I didn't... didn't see her before... didn't smell her...
...and on her wrist... it looks like the Tallus.
WHO'S HERE, SABES? WHO'S GOT A TALLUS?
CLARICE.
"MY CLARICE... I'D SWEAR IT..."
...SHE'S ALIVE.


Epilogue.
Level D of the Alpha Flight Research Facility.
Medical personnel, radiation specialists, and anthropologists from all over the globe work round the clock on a very *unique* patient.
Reed Richards, Tony Stark and Doctor Leonard Samson are en route.
A certain field commander got a *chewing out* from the Prime Minister of Canada for abusing authority and ignoring the chain of command.
A certain field commander *hung up* on him.
Not far away, a discussion between two young men with *old souls*..
DESPITE SOME OF THE UNPLEASANTNESS... I MUST SAY I HAVE *ENJOYED* STEPPING INTO THIS REALITY.
MEETING *YOU*, MOST SPECIFICALLY.
THE FEELING IS *MUTUAL*, JOHN.
IT'S NOT OFTEN YOU GET TO TALK TO *YOURSELF* WITHOUT IT BEING PARANOIA OR SOME PSYCHOTIC EPISODE.
WELL, I *DID* HAVE A PSYCHOTIC EPISODE, BUT I GET YOUR MEANING.
YOU KNOCKED OUT THE *HULK*, TOO. THAT DOESN'T STINK.
TRUE.
BUT YOU WON'T HEAR ME GOING ON ABOUT IT LIKE *SUSAN RICHARDS* DOES.
ISN'T THAT THE TRUTH? SHE SHOULD JUST HAVE BUSINESS CARDS THAT SAY *"SUE RICHARDS - INVISIBLE WOMAN - KNOCKED OUT THE HULK."*
AH, WE SHOULDN'T BE *TOO* HARD ON HER. LAME POWERS.
LAME POWERS...


Montreal.
Club Maup'n.
The Tallus spoke to a team of beleaguered wanderers and gave them a countdown of *twelve hours* before they left this reality.
Calvin Rankin chatted up an airborne speedster and convinced him to let him *mimic* his power of *flight*.
At first Northstar thought he was *hitting* on him.
C'est la vie...
The remainder hit the *dance floor*.
It would be fun but uneventful...
...except for Morph becoming an all-too *familiar* face, signing autographs and making the tabloids...
...(John Travolta would later *swear* he was in Wisconsin shooting a movie).
Meanwhile, Victor Creed's *heart* would hang *heavy*.
His life had always taken *unusual* turns... but recently, more than ever.
Plucked out of his own crumbling timeline from THE AGE OF APOCALYPSE and forced to hop realities to set things right...
...hoping his Tallus would explain to him *why* they had to teleport out of this world even though they *failed* their mission...
...and why this Clarice, his *child* if he ever had one, was saddled with the *same burden*.
BLINK
And why... oh, why... he couldn't be with her.
END.

MARVEL® COMICS

EXILES?™

MARVEL PG 12

WINICK
McKONE
HOLDREDGE
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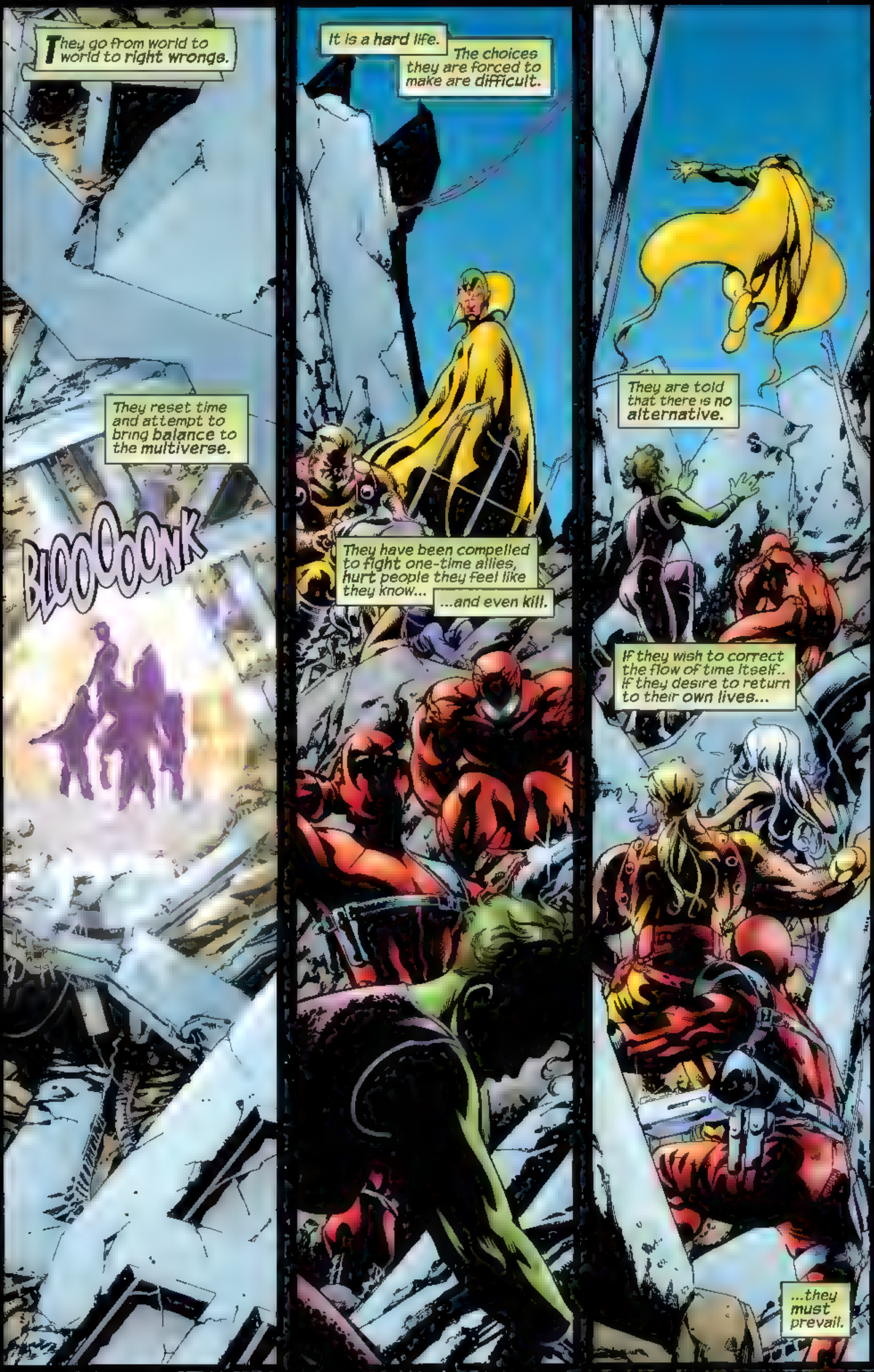
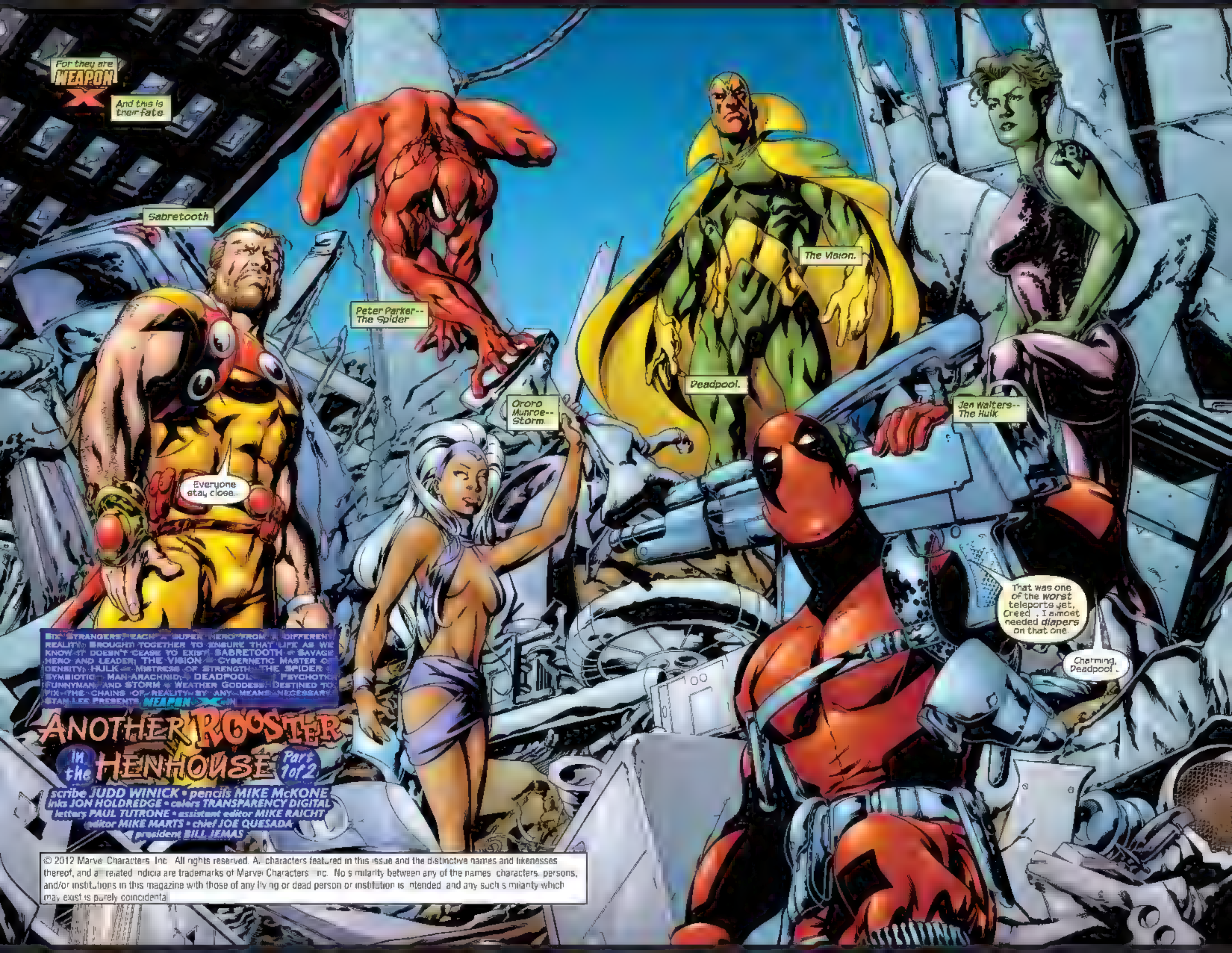

They go from world to world to right wrongs.
They reset time and attempt to bring balance to the multiverse.
BLOOOOONK
It is a hard life.
The choices they are forced to make are difficult.
They have been compelled to fight one-time allies, hurt people they feel like they know...
...and even kill.
They are told that there is no alternative.
If they wish to correct the flow of time itself.. If they desire to return to their own lives...
...they must prevail.


For they are WEAPON X
And this is their fate.
Sabretooth
Peter Parker-- The Spider
The Vision.
Deadpool.
Ororo Munroe-- Storm.
Jen Walters-- The Hulk.
Everyone stay close.
That was one of the *worst* teleports yet, Creed. I almost needed *diapers* on that one.
Charming, Deadpool.

SIX STRANGERS, EACH A SUPER HERO FROM A DIFFERENT REALITY. BROUGHT TOGETHER TO ENSURE THAT LIFE AS WE KNOW IT DOESN'T CEASE TO EXIST. SABRETOOTH — SAVAGE HERO AND LEADER; THE VISION — CYBERNETIC MASTER OF DENSITY; HULK — MISTRESS OF STRENGTH; THE SPIDER — SYMBIOTIC MAN-ARACHNID; DEADPOOL — PSYCHOTIC FUNNYMAN; AND STORM — WEATHER GODDESS. DESTINED TO FIX THE CHAINS OF REALITY BY ANY MEANS NECESSARY. STAN LEE PRESENTS WEAPON X.

ANOTHER ROOSTER in the HENHOUSE

Part 1 of 2

scribe JUDD WINICK • pencils MIKE McKONE
inks JON HOLDREDGE • colors TRANSPARENCY DIGITAL
letters PAUL TUTRONE • assistant editor MIKE RAICHT
editor MIKE MARTS • chief JOE QUESADA
president BILL JEMAS

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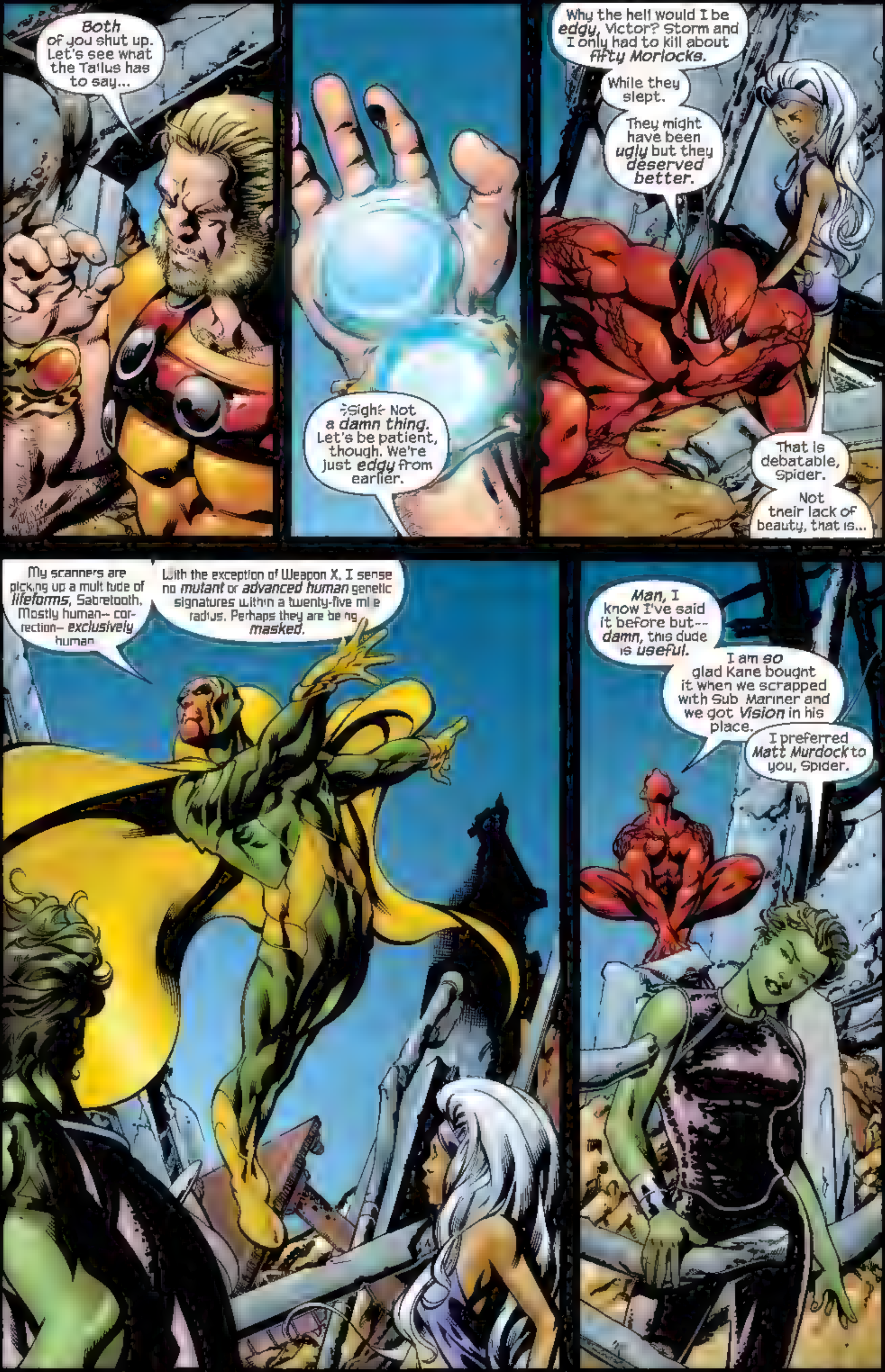
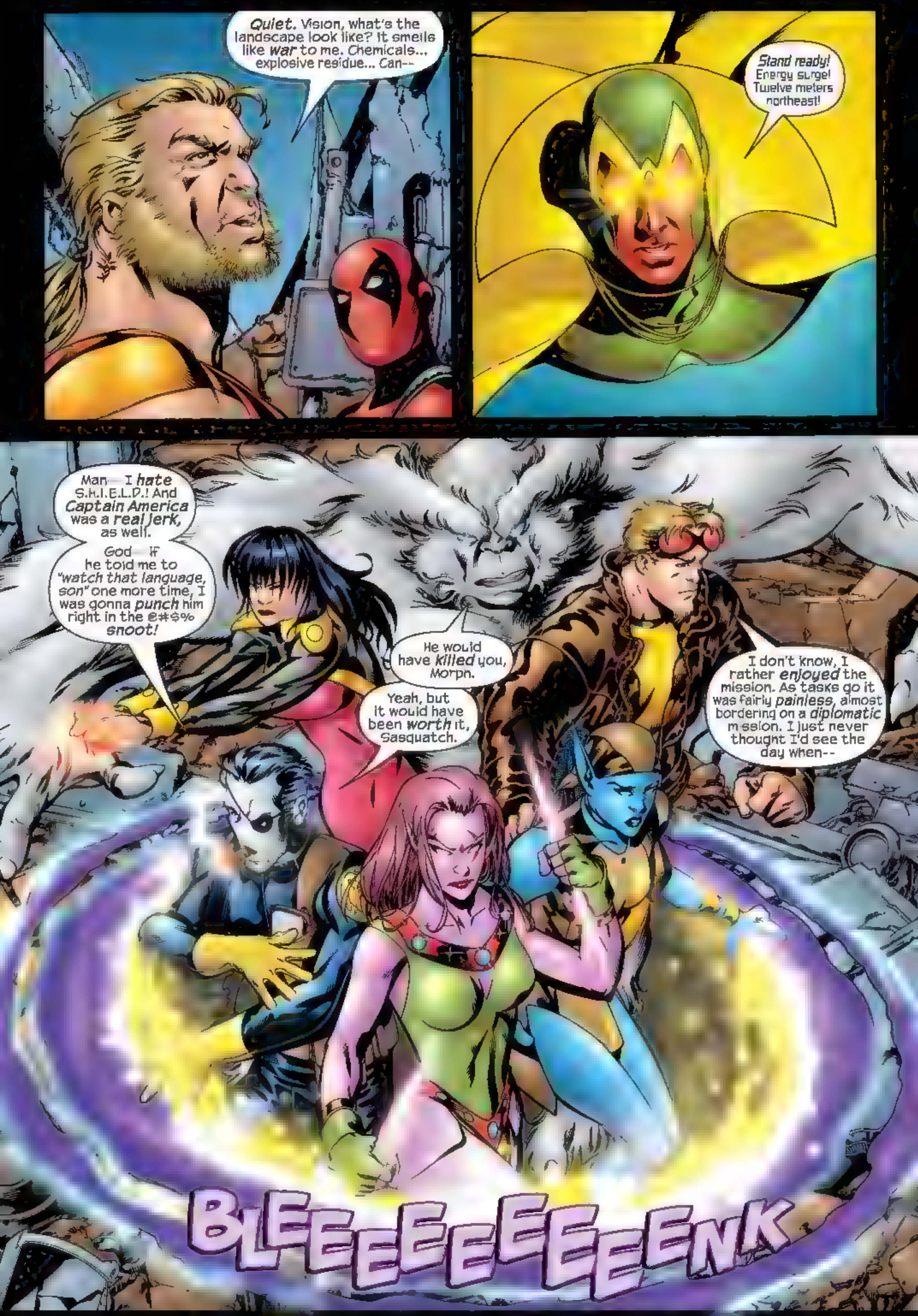
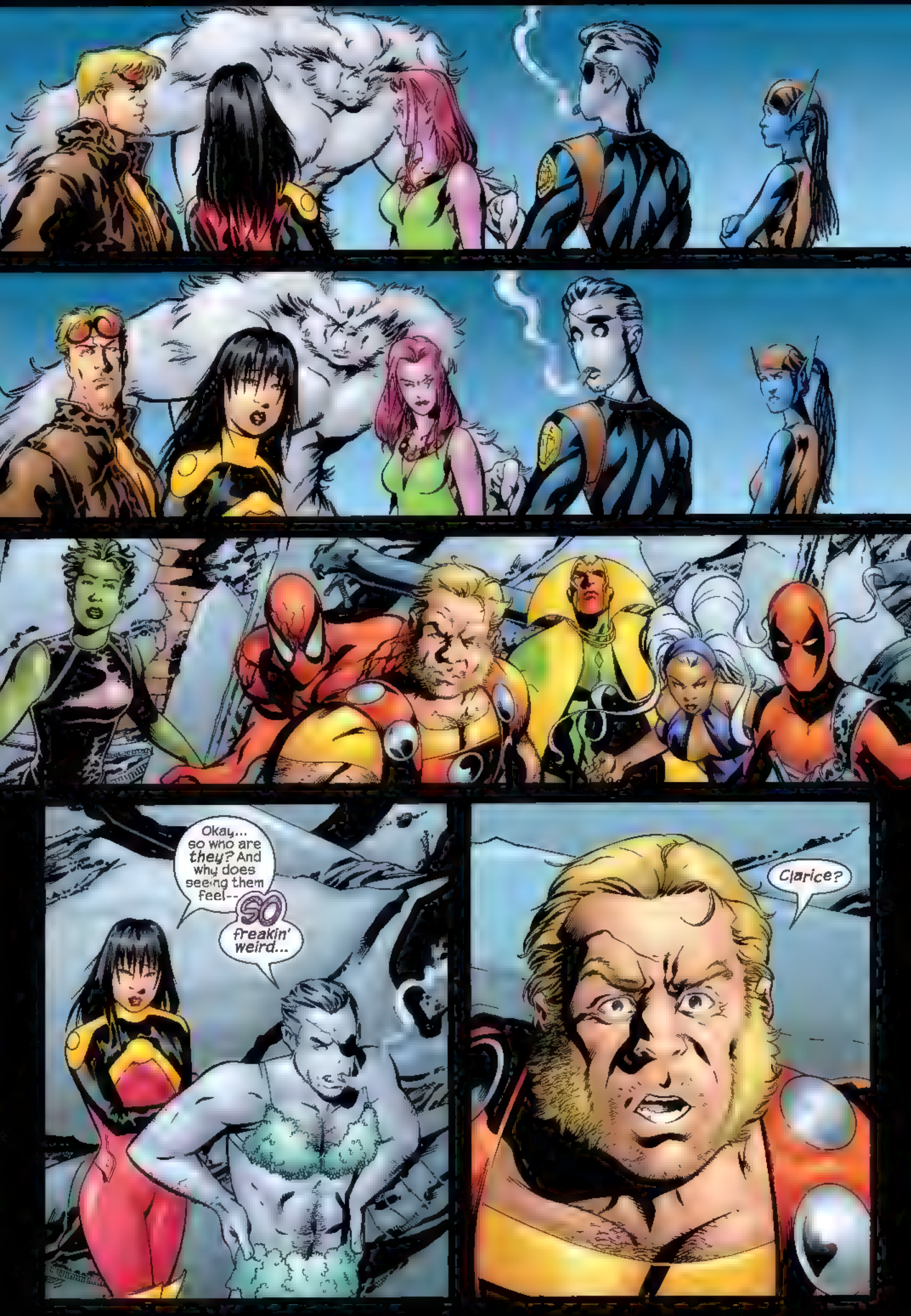
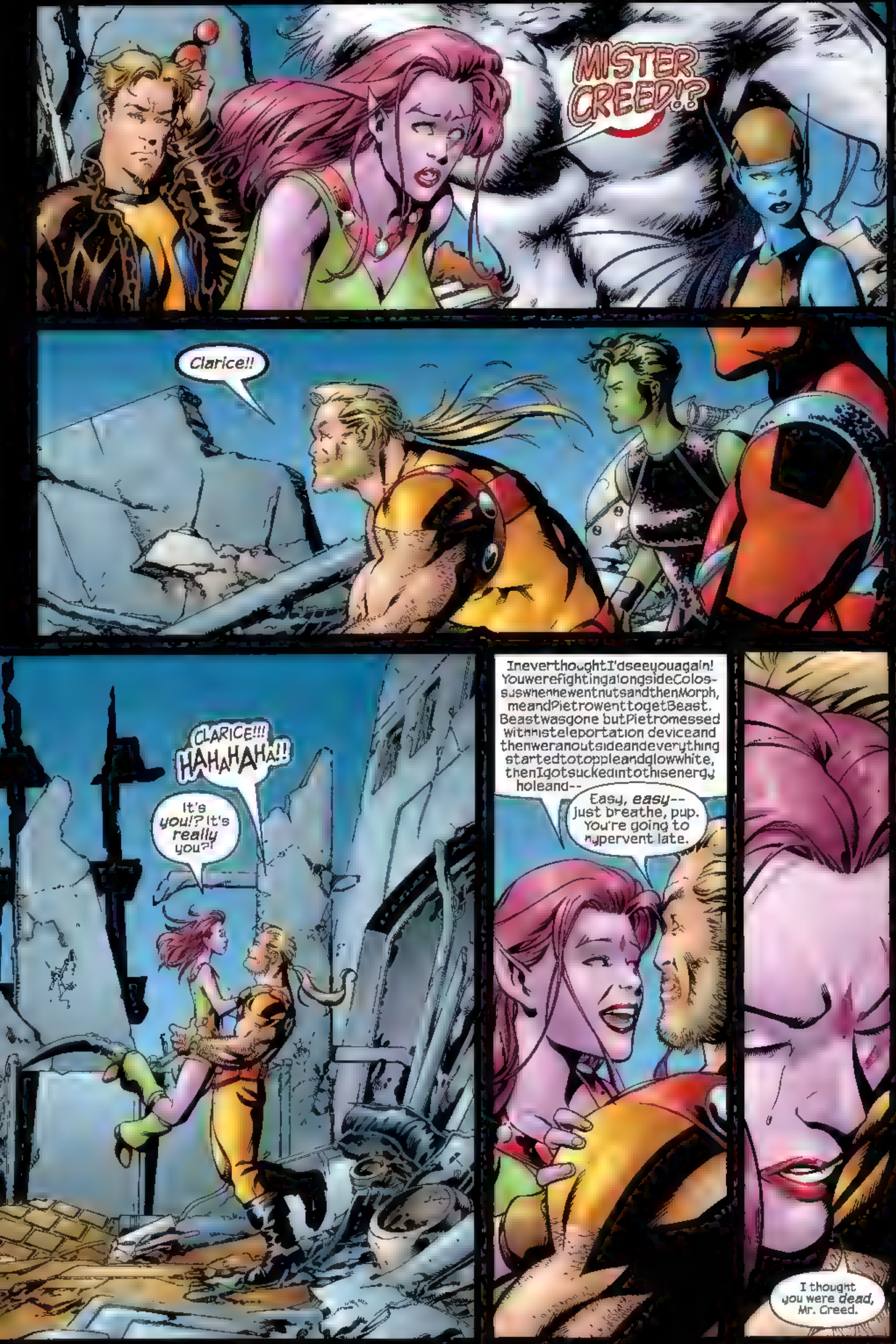
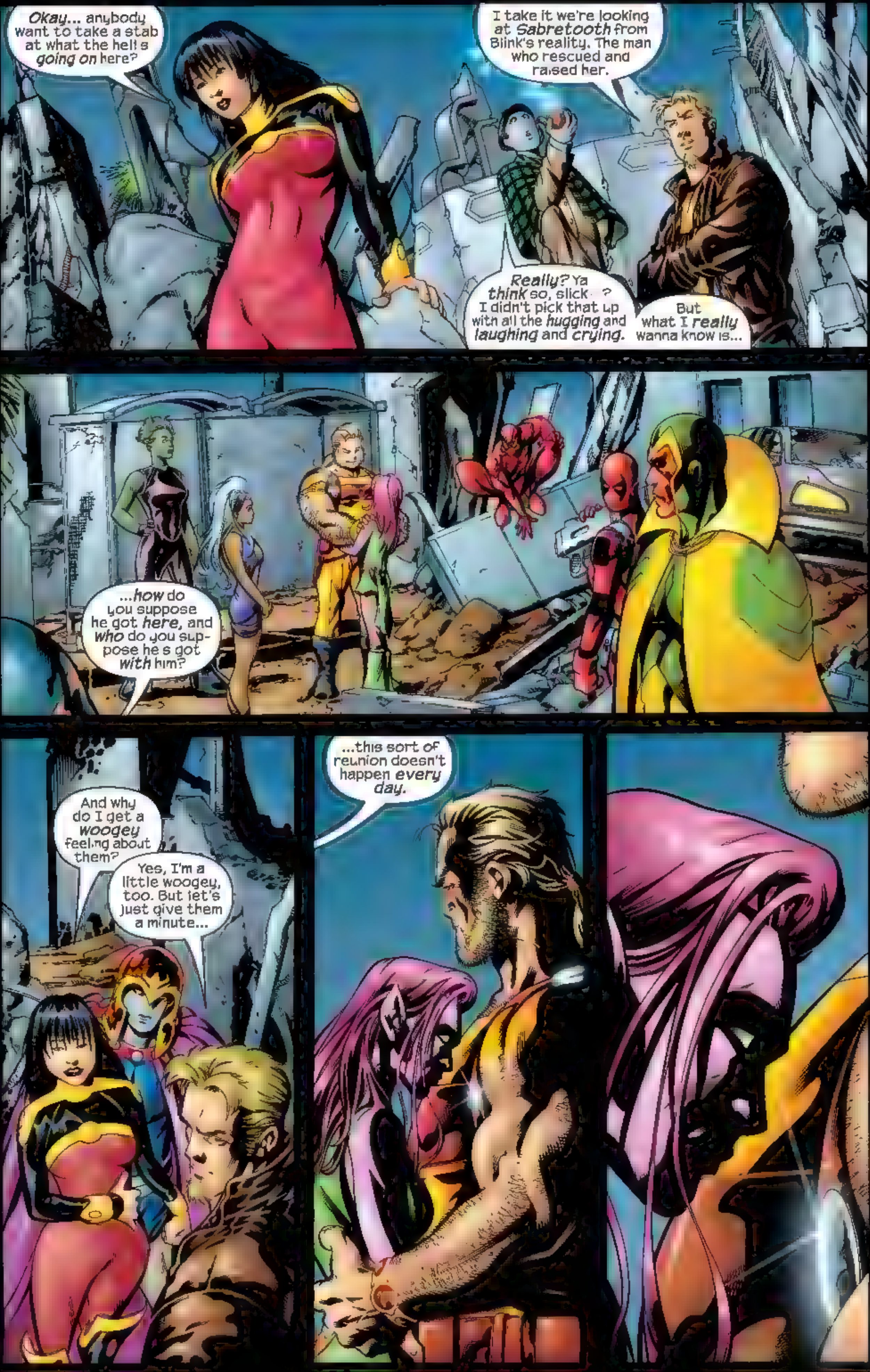
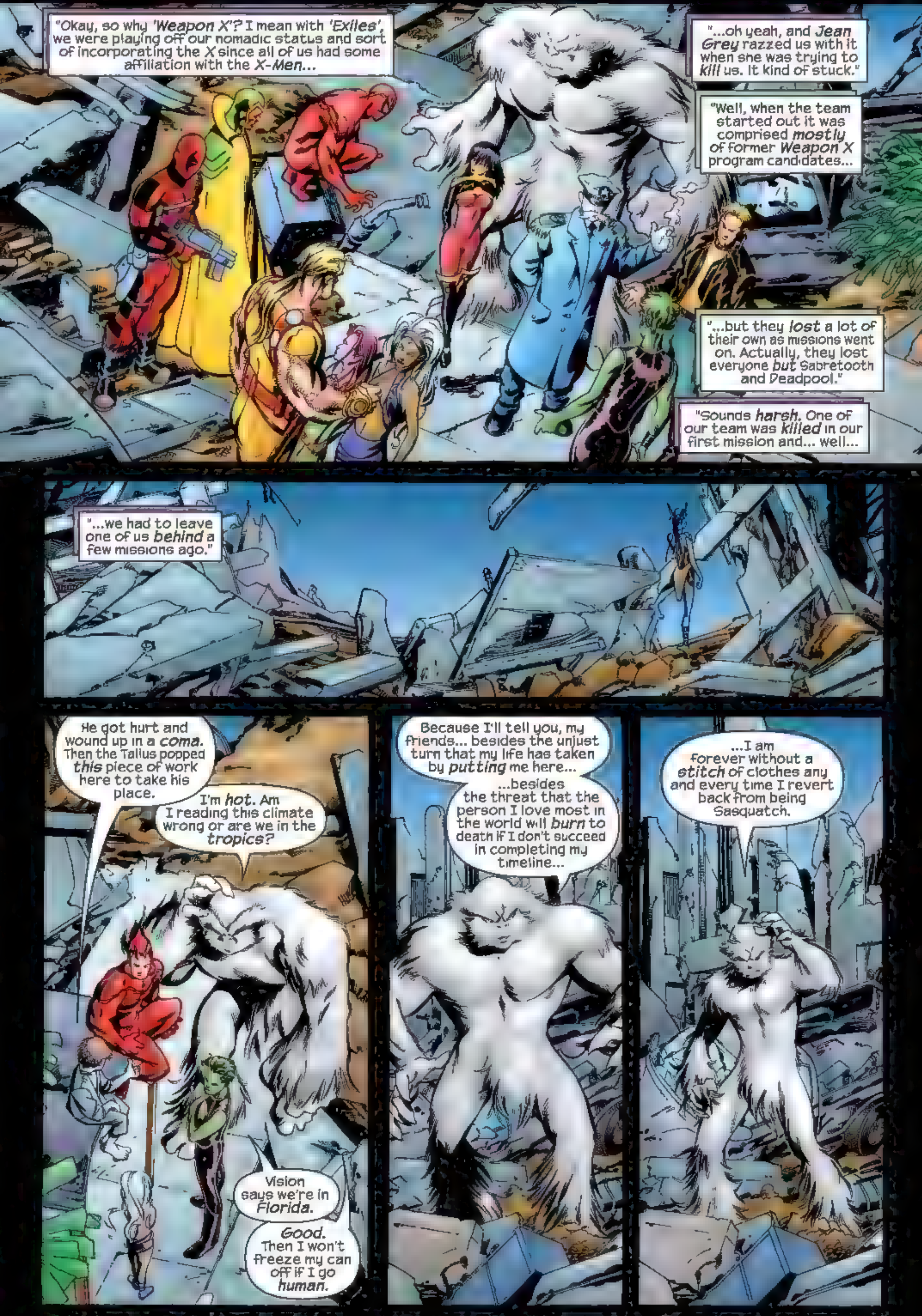

Both of you shut up. Let's see what the Tailus has to say...
⊰Sigh⊱ Not a damn thing. Let's be patient, though. We're just edgy from earlier.
Why the hell would I be edgy, Victor? Storm and I only had to kill about fifty Morlocks.
While they slept.
They might have been ugly but they deserved better.
That is debatable, Spider.
Not their lack of beauty, that is...
My scanners are picking up a multitude of lifeforms, Sabretooth. Mostly human-- correction-- exclusively human.
With the exception of Weapon X, I sense no mutant or advanced human genetic signatures within a twenty-five mile radius. Perhaps they are being masked.
Man, I know I've said it before but-- damn, this dude is useful.
I am so glad Kane bought it when we scrapped with Sub Mariner and we got Vision in his place.
I preferred Matt Murdock to you, Spider.

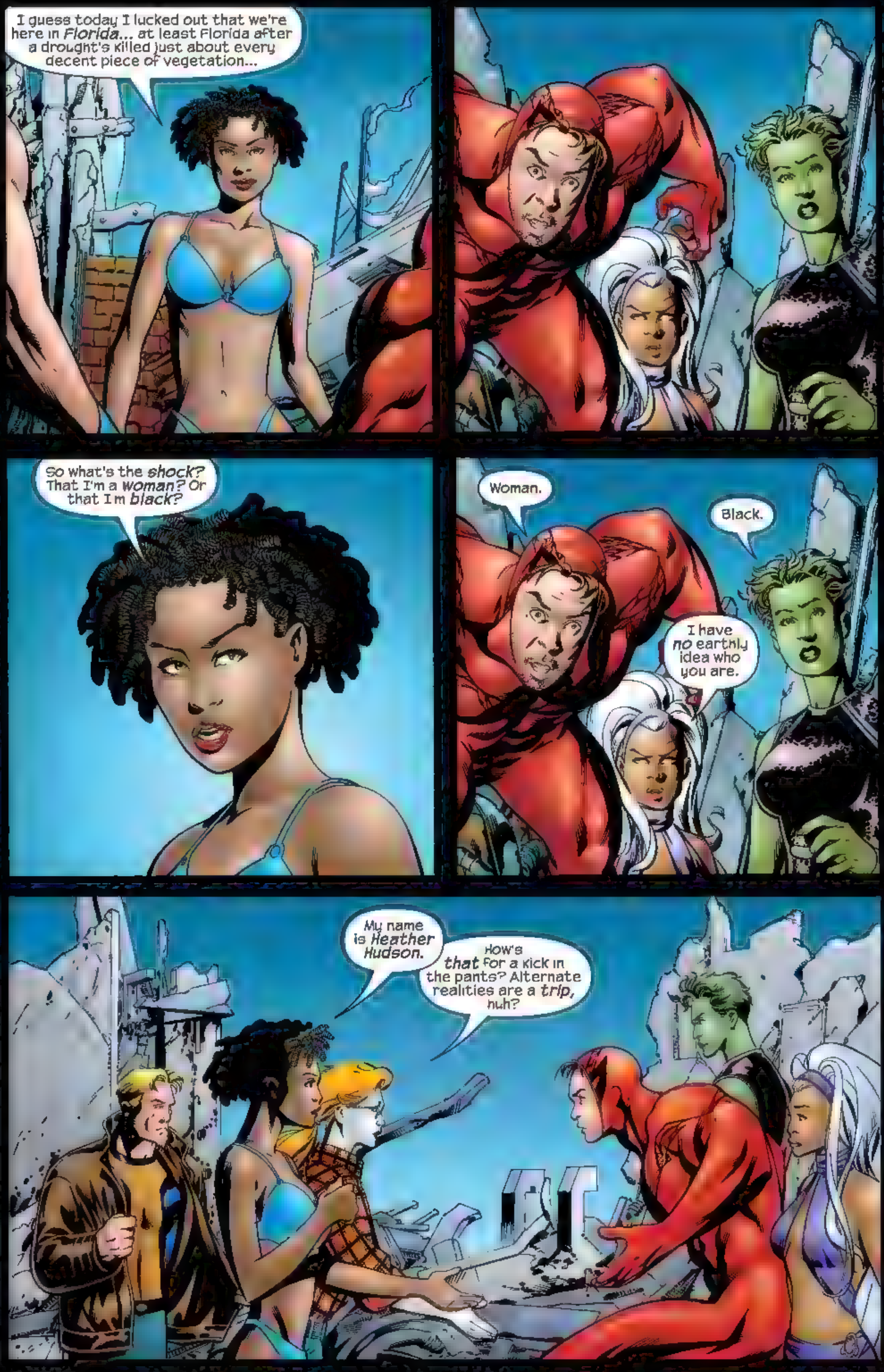

Quiet. Vision, what's the landscape look like? It smells like *war* to me. Chemicals... explosive residue... Can--
Stand ready! Energy surge! Twelve meters northeast!
Man— I *hate* S.H.I.E.L.D.! And *Captain America* was a *real jerk,* as well.
God— If he told me to *"watch that language, son"* one more time, I was gonna *punch* him right in the @#$% *snoot!*
He would have *killed* you, Morph.
Yeah, but it would have been *worth* it, Sasquatch.
I don't know, I rather *enjoyed* the mission. As tasks go it was fairly *painless,* almost bordering on a *diplomatic* mission. I just never thought I'd see the day when--
BLEEEEEEEEEEENK

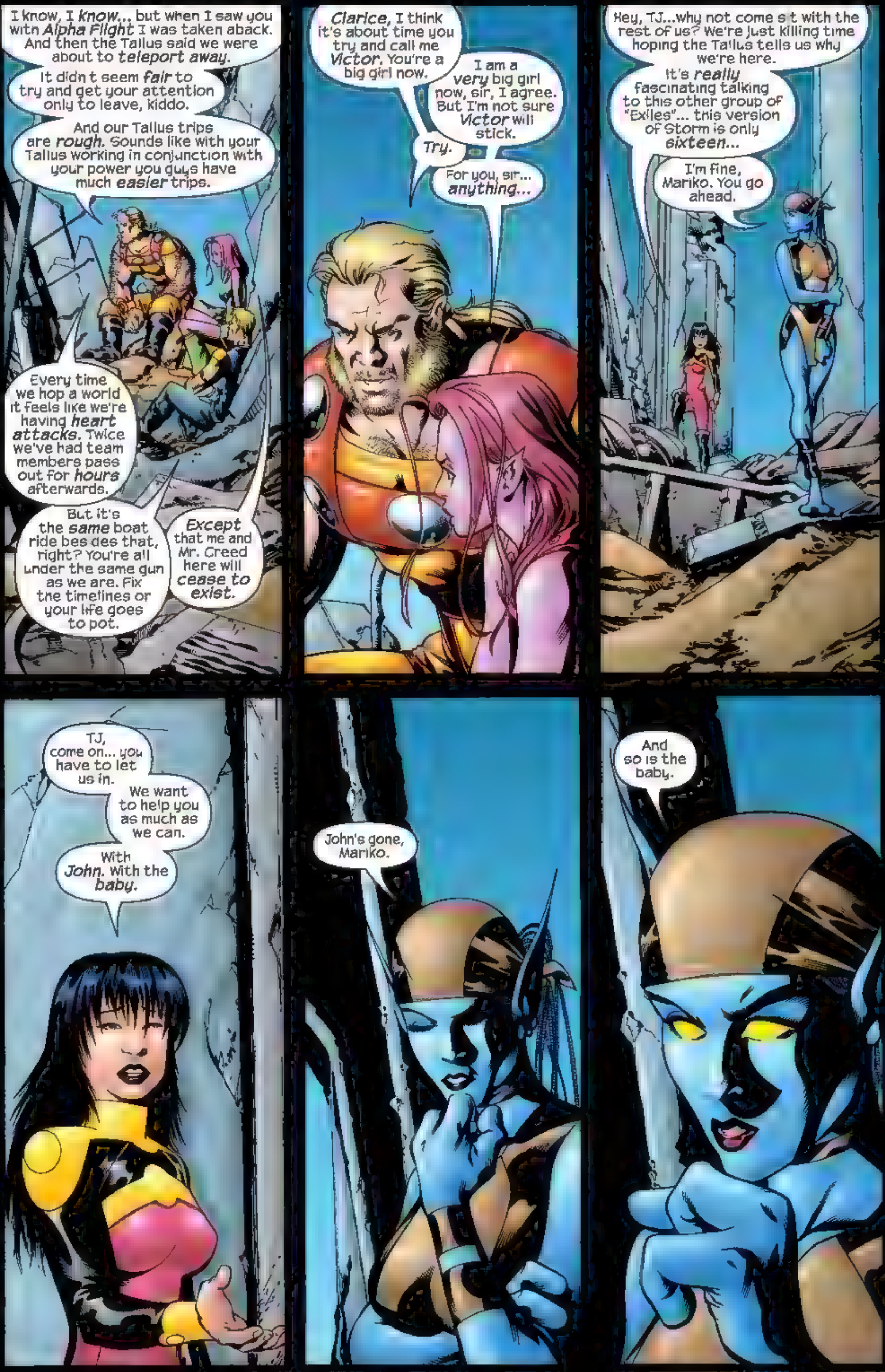

Okay... so who are they? And why does seeing them feel-- SO freakin' weird...
Clarice?

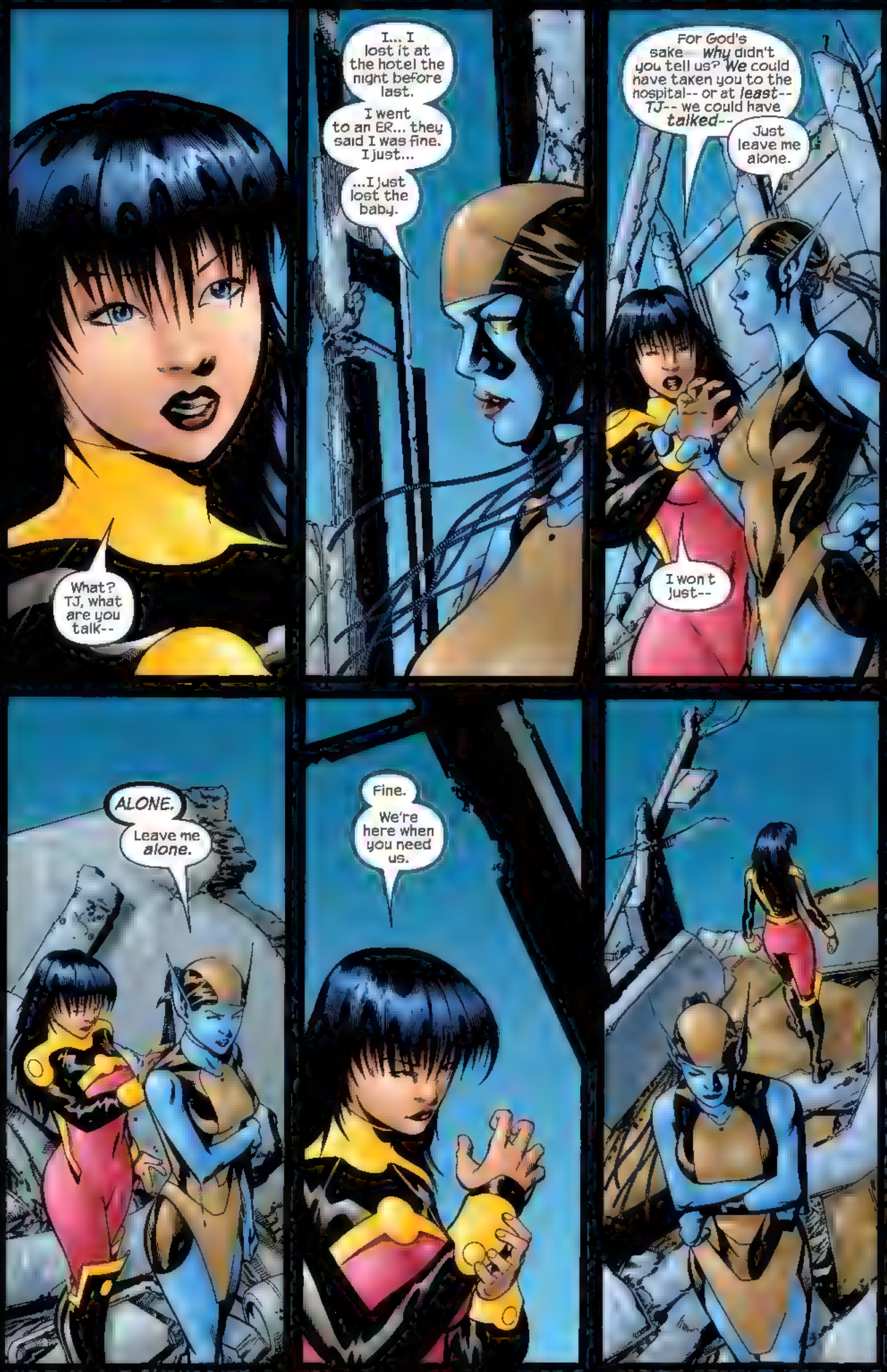

MISTER CREED!?
Clarice!!
CLARICE!!! HAHAHAHA!!
It's you!? It's really you?!
Ineverthought I'dseeyouagain! YouwerefightingalongsideColossuswhenhewentnutsandthenMorph, meandPietrowenttogetBeast. Beastwasgone butPietromessed withhisteleportation deviceand thenweranoutsideandeverything startedtotoppleandglowwhite, thenIgotsuckedintothisenergy holeand--
Easy, easy-- just breathe, pup. You're going to hyperventilate.
I thought you were dead, Mr. Creed.

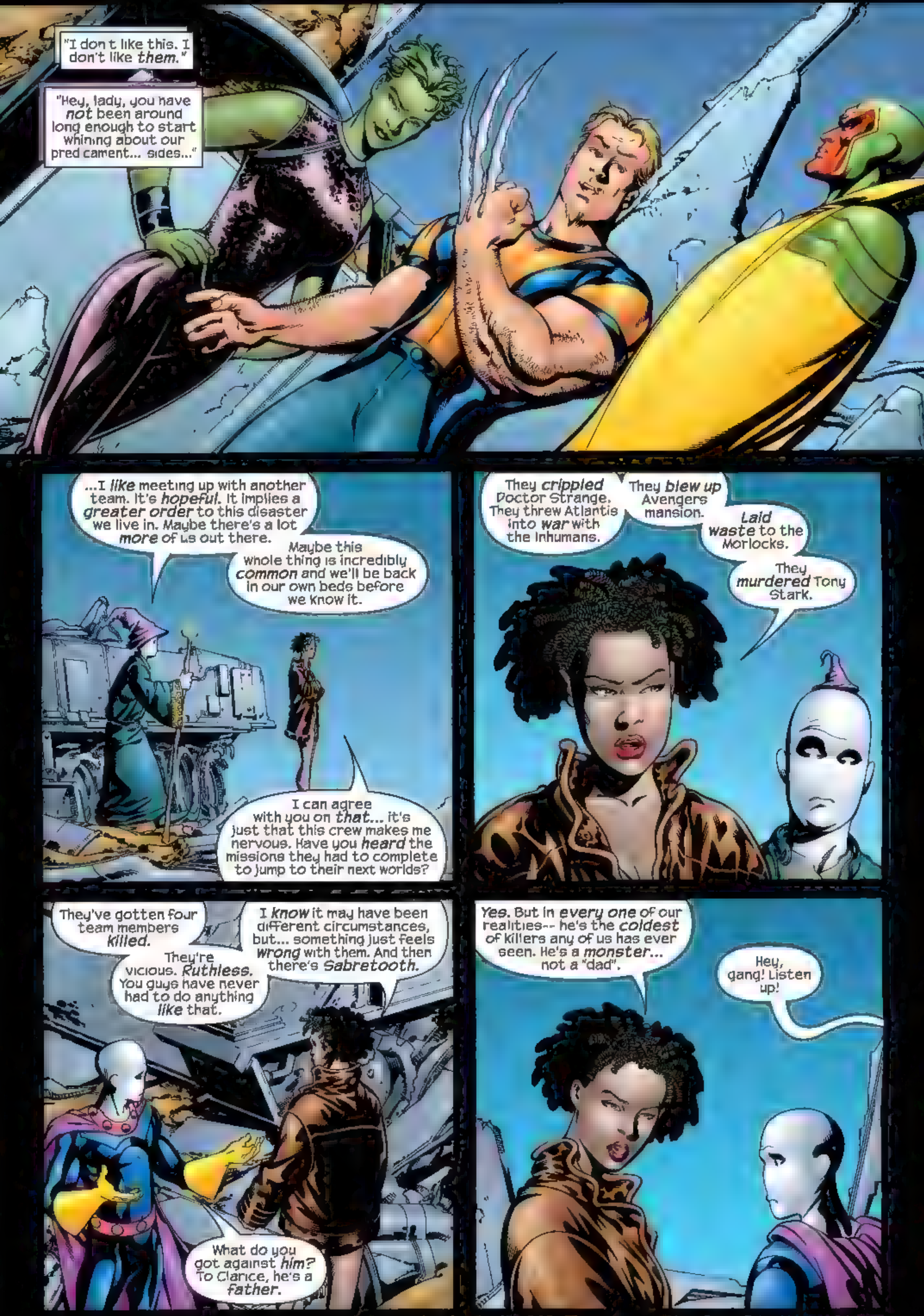

Okay... anybody want to take a stab at what the hell's going on here?
I take it we're looking at Sabretooth from Blink's reality. The man who rescued and raised her.
Really? Ya think so, slick...? I didn't pick that up with all the hugging and laughing and crying.
But what I really wanna know is...
...how do you suppose he got here, and who do you suppose he's got with him?
And why do I get a woogey feeling about them?
Yes, I'm a little woogey, too. But let's just give them a minute...
...this sort of reunion doesn't happen every day.

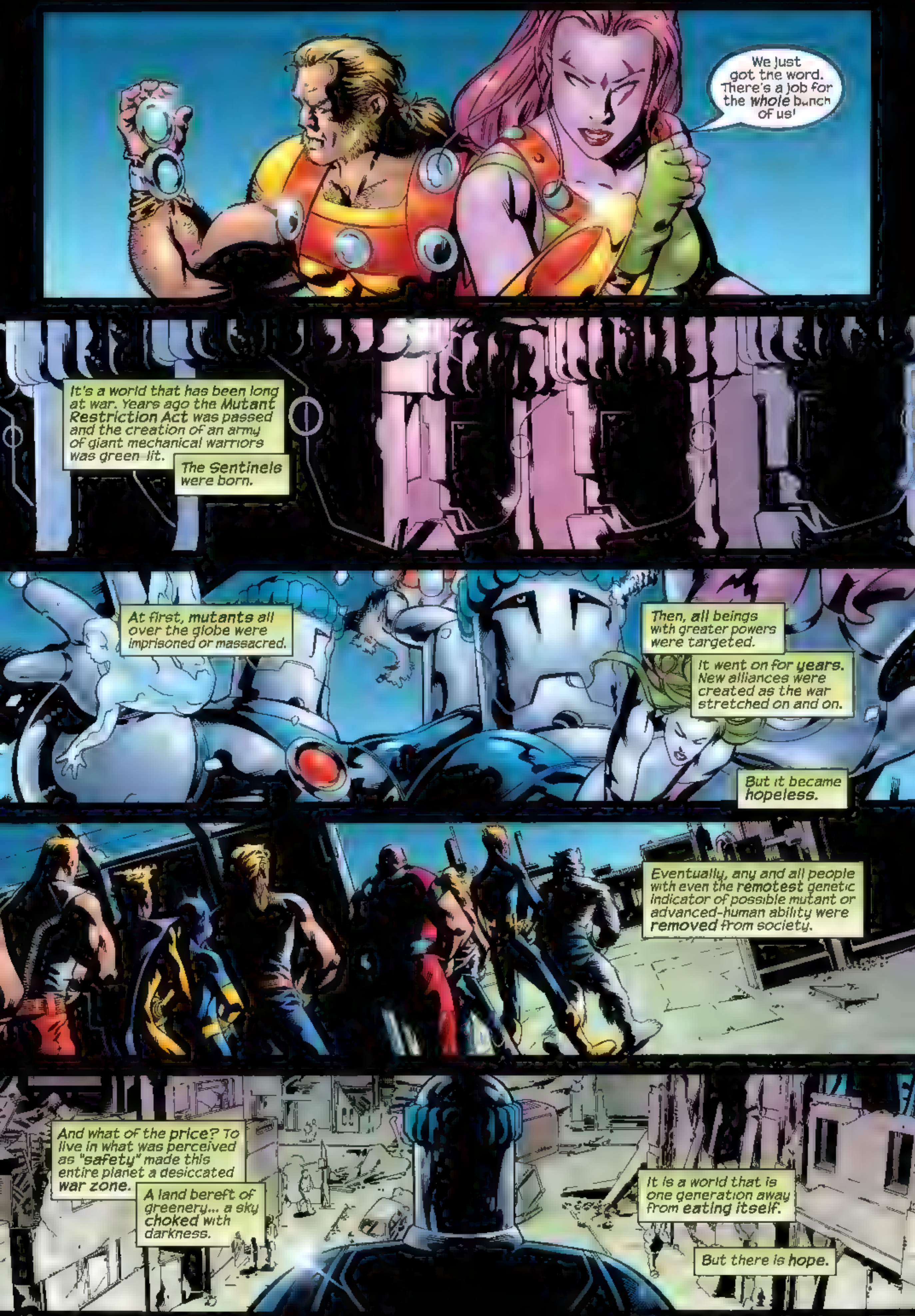

"Okay, so why *'Weapon X'*? I mean with *'Exiles'*, we were playing off our nomadic status and sort of incorporating the *X* since all of us had some affiliation with the *X-Men*...
"...oh yeah, and *Jean Grey* razzed us with it when she was trying to *kill* us. It kind of stuck."
"Well, when the team started out it was comprised *mostly* of former *Weapon X* program candidates...
"...but they *lost* a lot of their own as missions went on. Actually, they lost everyone *but* Sabretooth and Deadpool."
"Sounds *harsh*. One of our team was *killed* in our first mission and... well...
"...we had to leave one of us *behind* a few missions ago."
He got hurt and wound up in a *coma*. Then the Tallus popped *this* piece of work here to take his place.
I'm *hot*. Am I reading this climate wrong or are we in the *tropics?*
Vision says we're in *Florida*.
Good. Then I won't freeze my can off if I go *human*.
Because I'll tell you, my friends... besides the unjust turn that my life has taken by *putting* me here...
...besides the threat that the person I love most in the world will *burn* to death if I don't succeed in completing my timeline...
...I am forever without a *stitch* of clothes any and every time I revert back from being Sasquatch.

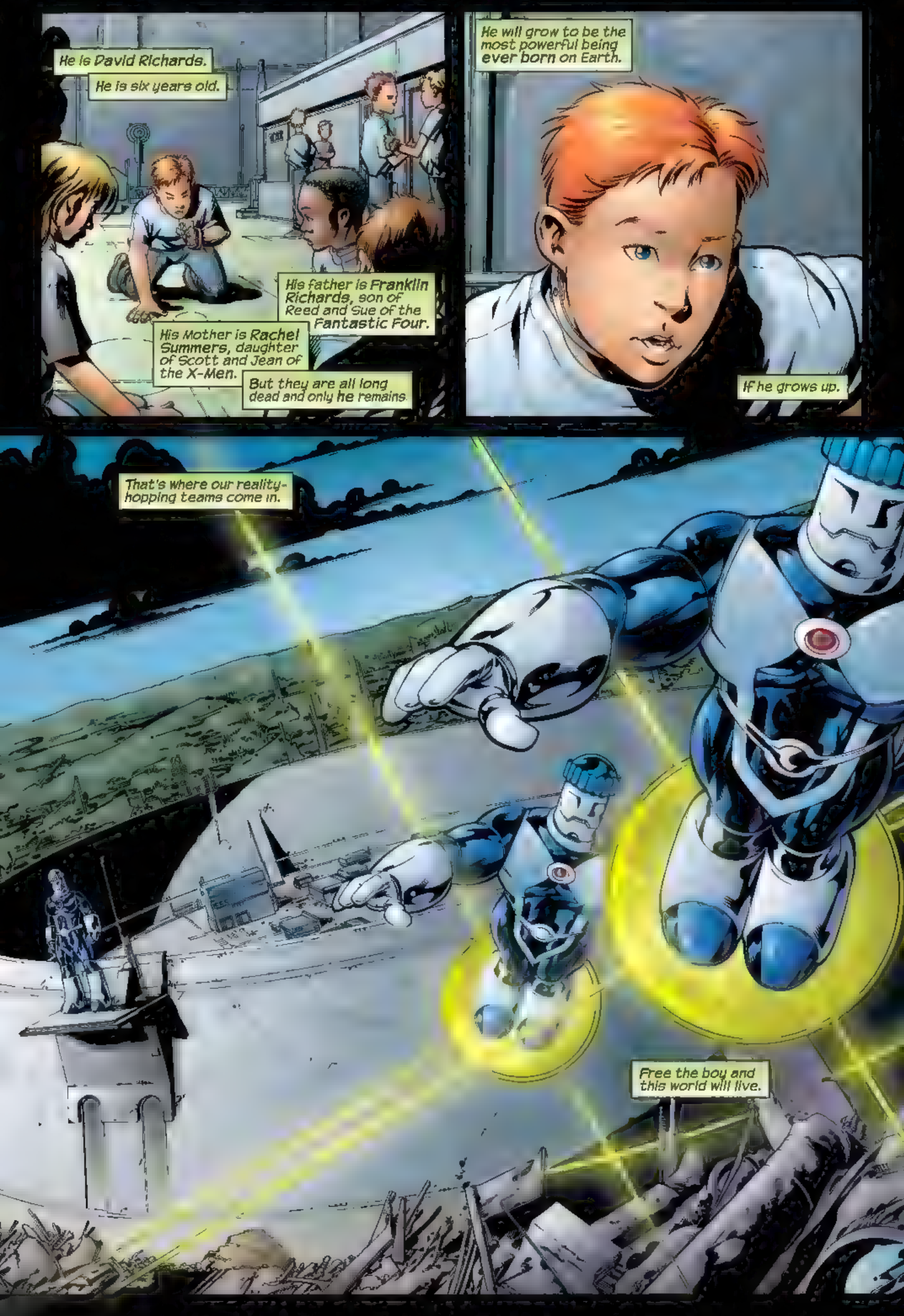

I guess today I lucked out that we're here in *Florida...* at least Florida after a drought's killed just about every decent piece of vegetation...
So what's the *shock?* That I'm a *woman?* Or that I'm *black?*
Woman.
Black.
I have *no* earthly idea who you are.
My name is *Heather Hudson.*
How's *that* for a kick in the pants? Alternate realities are a *trip,* huh?

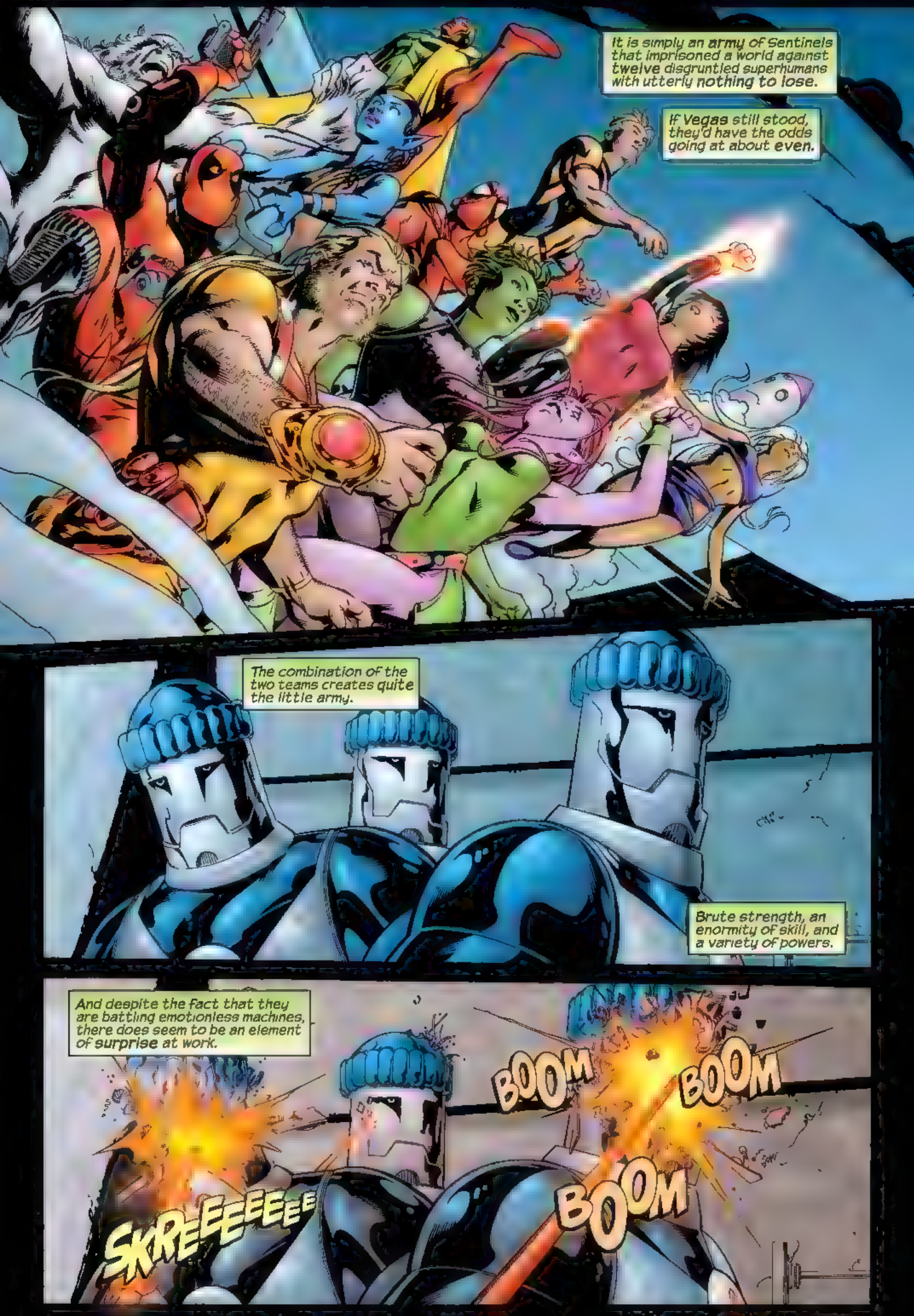

I know, I *know*... but when I saw you with *Alpha Flight* I was taken aback. And then the Tallus said we were about to *teleport away*.
It didn't seem *fair* to try and get your attention only to leave, kiddo.
And our Tallus trips are *rough*. Sounds like with your Tallus working in conjunction with your power you guys have much *easier* trips.
Every time we hop a world it feels like we're having *heart attacks*. Twice we've had team members pass out for *hours* afterwards.
But it's the *same* boat ride besides that, right? You're all under the same gun as we are. Fix the timelines or your life goes to pot.
Except that me and Mr. Creed here will *cease to exist*.
Clarice, I think it's about time you try and call me *Victor*. You're a big girl now.
I am a *very* big girl now, sir, I agree. But I'm not sure *Victor* will stick.
Try.
For you, sir... *anything*...
Hey, TJ...why not come sit with the rest of us? We're just killing time hoping the Tallus tells us why we're here.
It's *really* fascinating talking to this other group of "Exiles"... this version of Storm is only *sixteen*...
I'm fine, Mariko. You go ahead.
TJ, come on... you have to let us in.
We want to help you as much as we can.
With *John*. With the *baby*.
John's gone, Mariko.
And so is the baby.

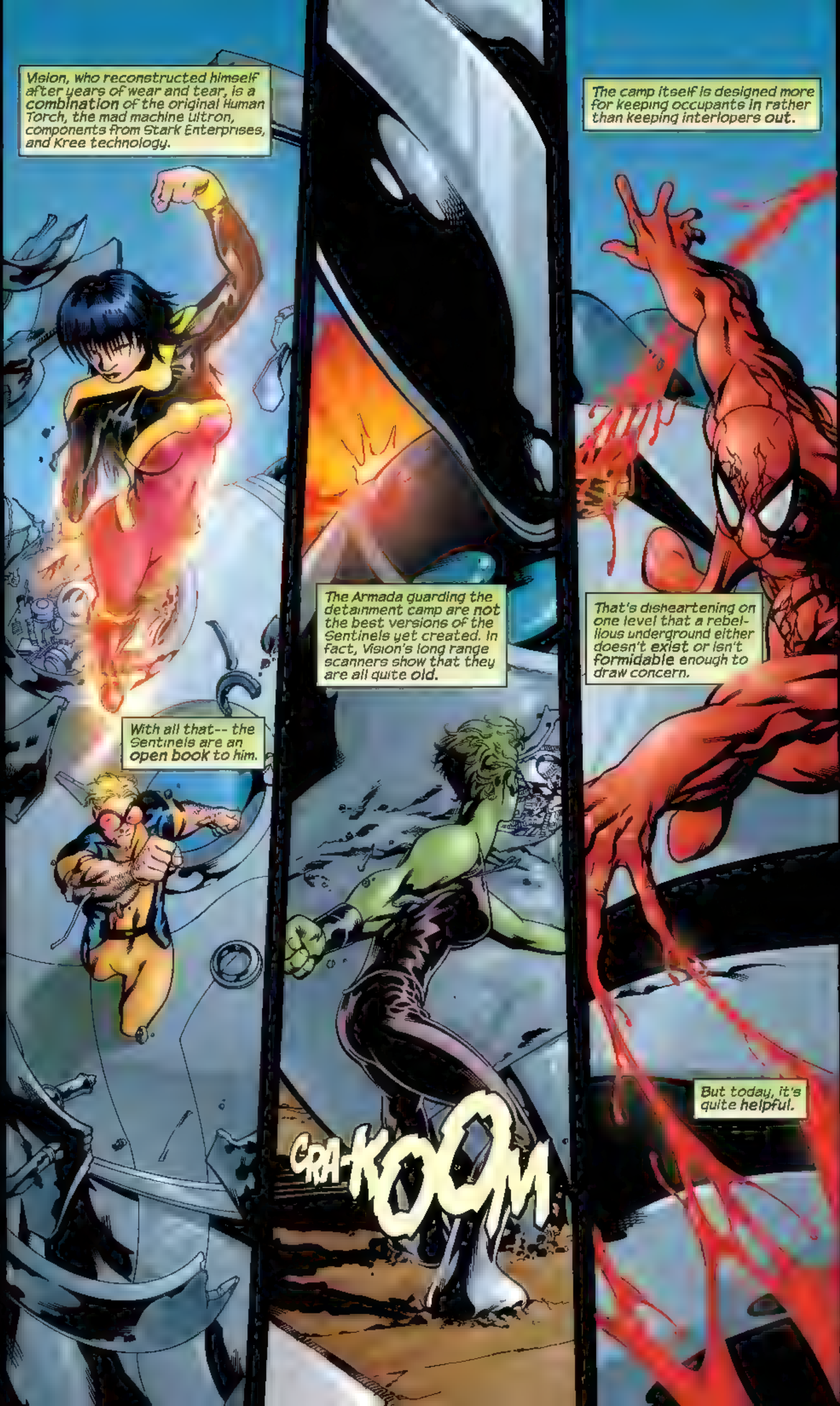

What? TJ, what are you talk--
I... I lost it at the hotel the night before last.
I went to an ER... they said I was fine. I just...
...I just lost the baby.
For God's sake-- why didn't you tell us? We could have taken you to the hospital-- or at least-- TJ-- we could have talked--
Just leave me alone.
I won't just--
ALONE.
Leave me alone.
Fine.
We're here when you need us.

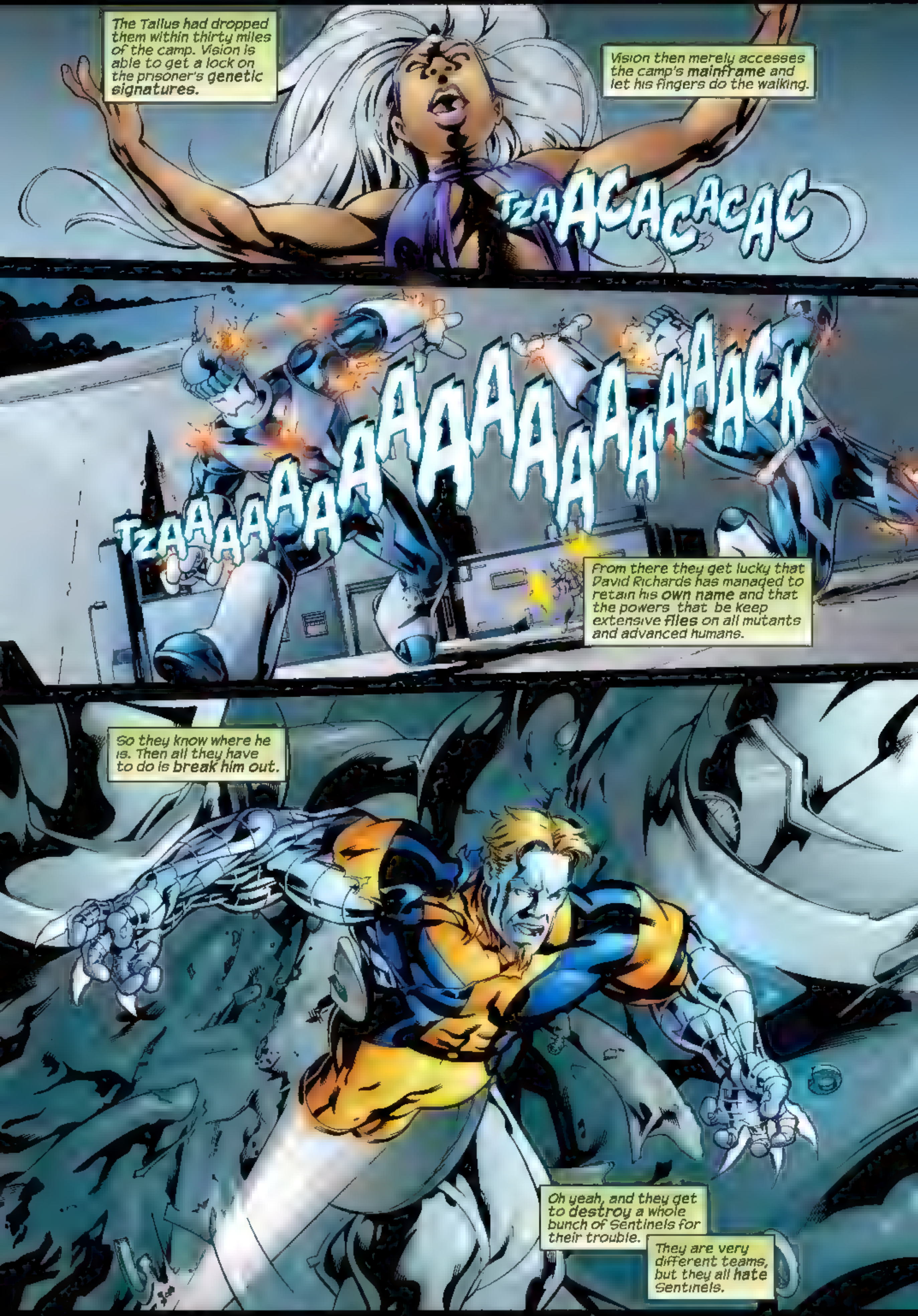

"I don't like this. I don't like *them.*"
"Hey, lady, you have *not* been around long enough to start whining about our predicament... sides..."
...I *like* meeting up with another team. It's *hopeful.* It implies a *greater order* to this disaster we live in. Maybe there's a lot *more* of us out there.
Maybe this whole thing is incredibly *common* and we'll be back in our own beds before we know it.
I can agree with you on *that...* it's just that this crew makes me nervous. Have you *heard* the missions they had to complete to jump to their next worlds?
They *crippled* Doctor Strange. They threw Atlantis into *war* with the Inhumans.
They *blew up* Avengers mansion.
Laid waste to the Morlocks.
They *murdered* Tony Stark.
They've gotten four team members *killed.*
They're vicious. *Ruthless.* You guys have never had to do anything *like* that.
I *know* it may have been different circumstances, but... something just feels *wrong* with them. And then there's *Sabretooth.*
What do you got against *him?* To Clarice, he's a *father.*
Yes. But in *every one* of our realities-- he's the *coldest* of killers any of us has ever seen. He's a *monster...* not a "dad".
Hey, gang! Listen up!

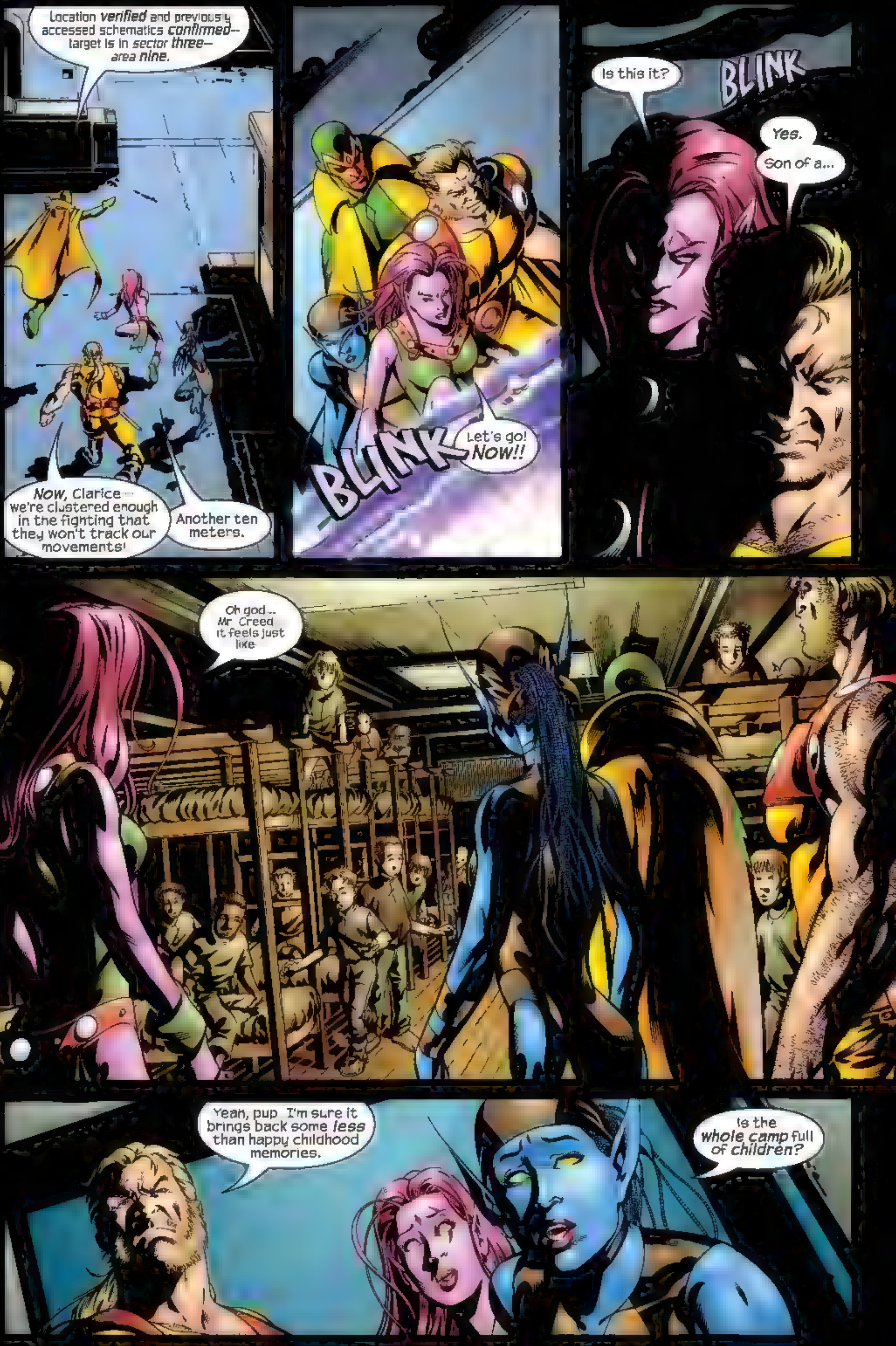

We just got the word. There's a job for the *whole* bunch of us!
It's a world that has been long at war. Years ago the *Mutant Restriction Act* was passed and the creation of an army of giant mechanical warriors was green lit.
The *Sentinels* were born.
At first, **mutants** all over the globe were imprisoned or massacred.
Then, **all** beings with greater powers were targeted.
It went on for **years.** New alliances were created as the war stretched on and on.
But it became **hopeless.**
Eventually, any and all people with even the **remotest** genetic indicator of possible mutant or advanced-human ability were **removed** from society.
And what of the **price?** To live in what was perceived as "**safety**" made this entire planet a desiccated **war zone.**
A land bereft of greenery... a sky **choked** with darkness.
It is a world that is one generation away from **eating itself.**
But there is **hope.**

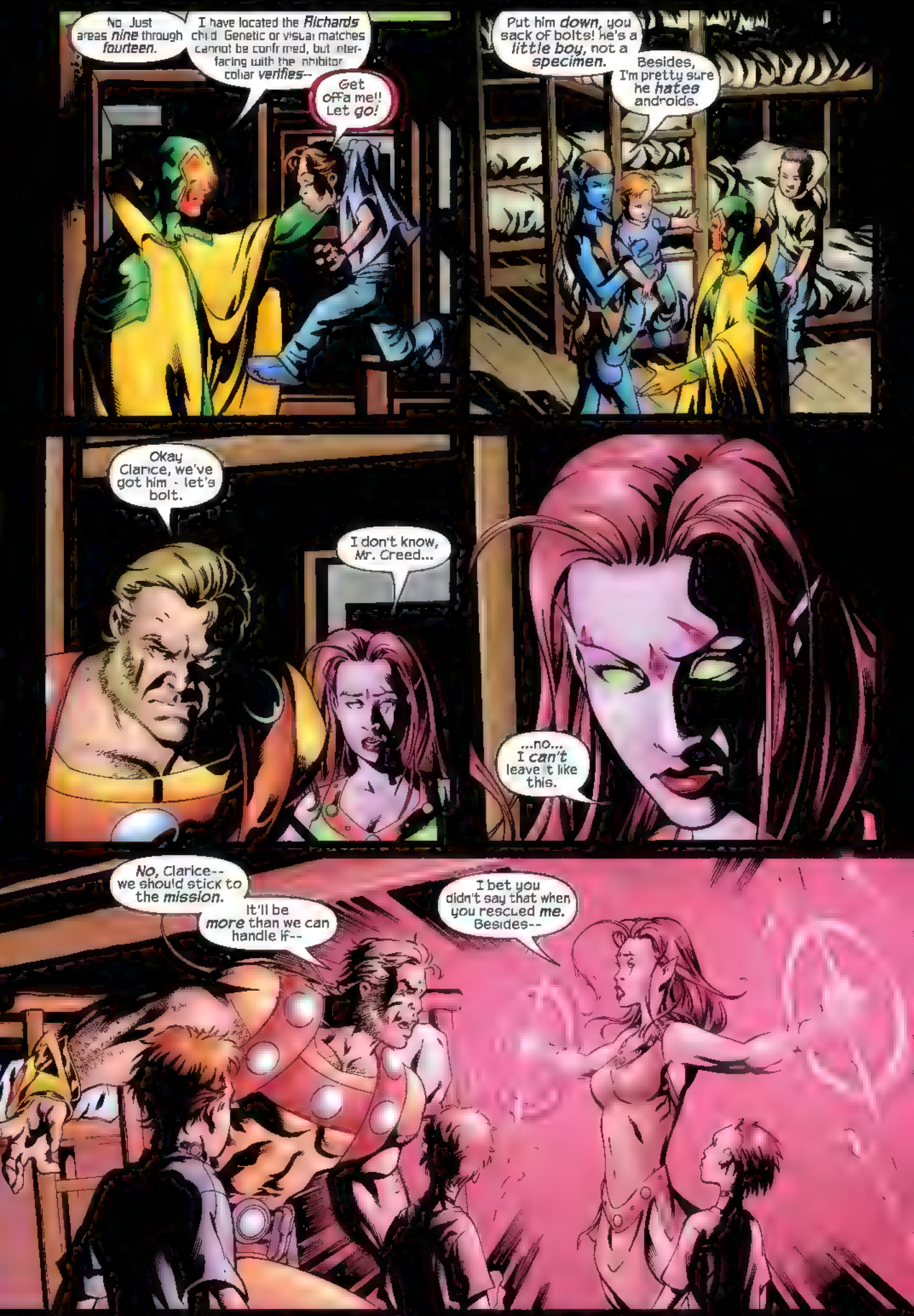

He is David Richards.
He is six years old.
His father is Franklin Richards, son of Reed and Sue of the Fantastic Four.
His Mother is Rachel Summers, daughter of Scott and Jean of the X-Men.
But they are all long dead and only he remains.
He will grow to be the most powerful being ever born on Earth.
If he grows up.
That's where our reality-hopping teams come in.
Free the boy and this world will live.

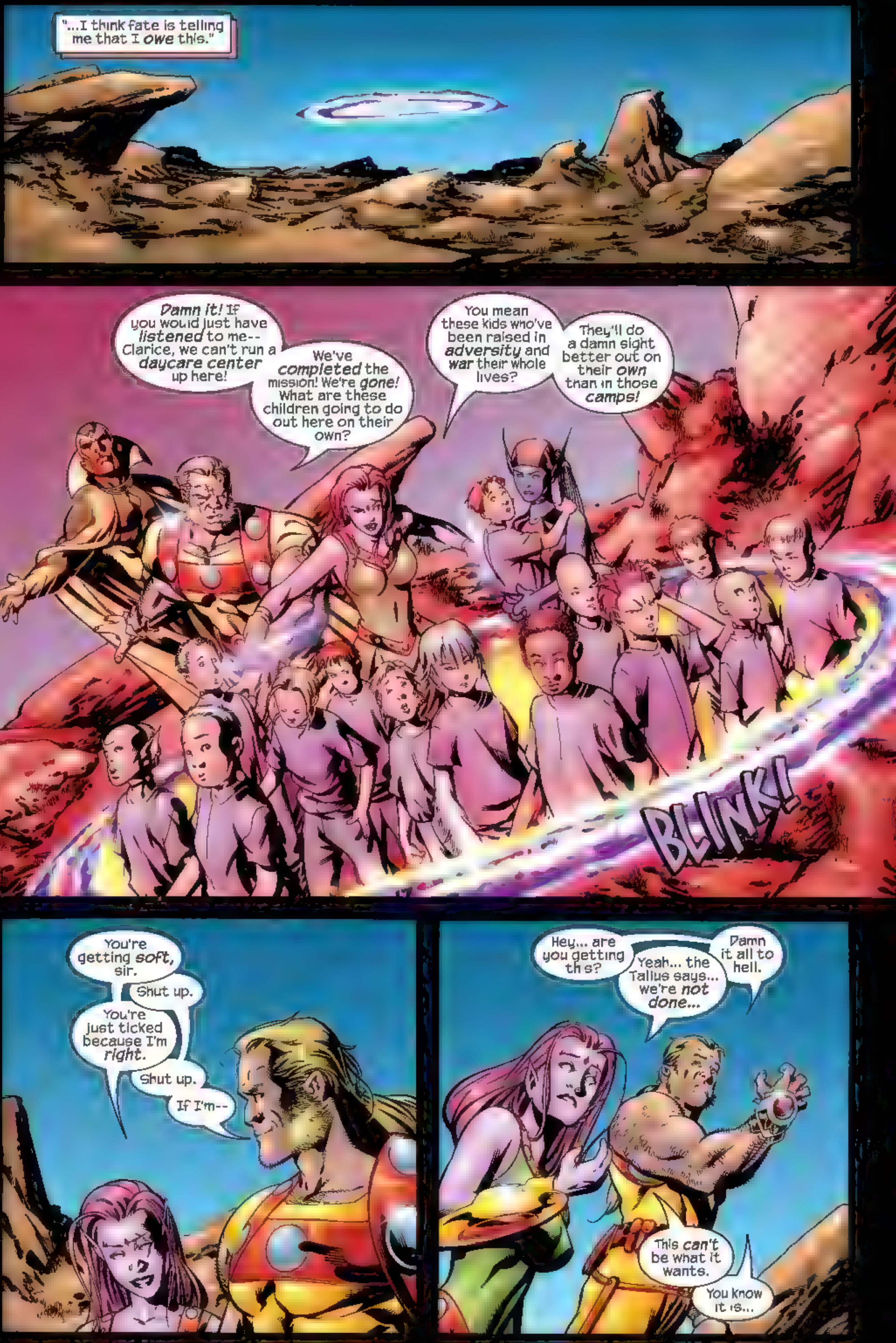

It is simply an army of Sentinels that imprisoned a world against twelve disgruntled superhumans with utterly nothing to lose.
If Vegas still stood, they'd have the odds going at about even.
The combination of the two teams creates quite the little army.
Brute strength, an enormity of skill, and a variety of powers.
And despite the fact that they are battling emotionless machines, there does seem to be an element of surprise at work.
BOOM
BOOM
SKREEEEEEEEE
BOOM

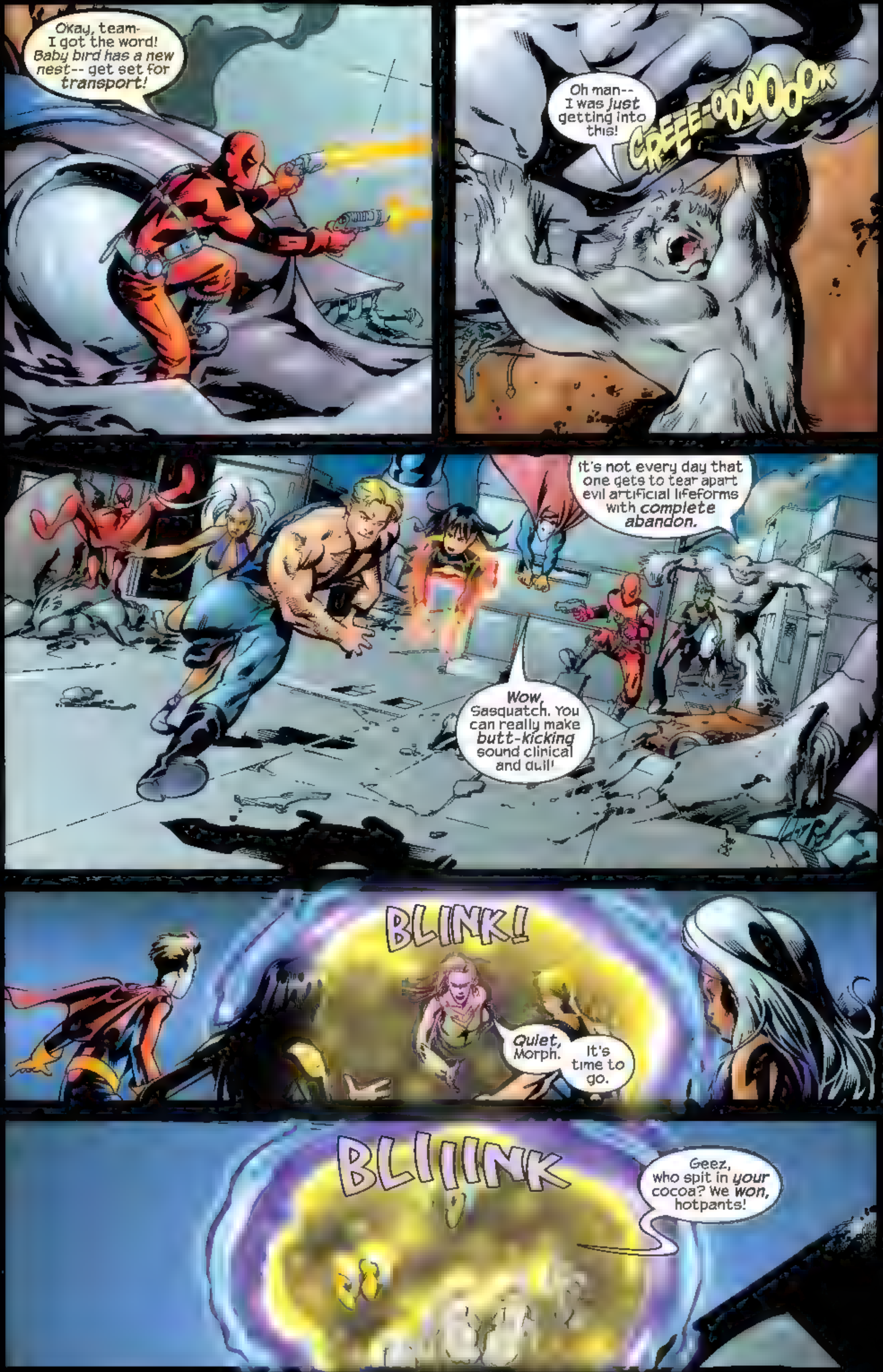

Vision, who reconstructed himself after years of wear and tear, is a combination of the original Human Torch, the mad machine Ultron, components from Stark Enterprises, and Kree technology.
With all that-- the Sentinels are an open book to him.
The Armada guarding the detainment camp are not the best versions of the Sentinels yet created. In fact, Vision's long range scanners show that they are all quite old.
GRA-KOOM
The camp itself is designed more for keeping occupants in rather than keeping interlopers out.
That's disheartening on one level that a rebellious underground either doesn't exist or isn't formidable enough to draw concern.
But today, it's quite helpful.

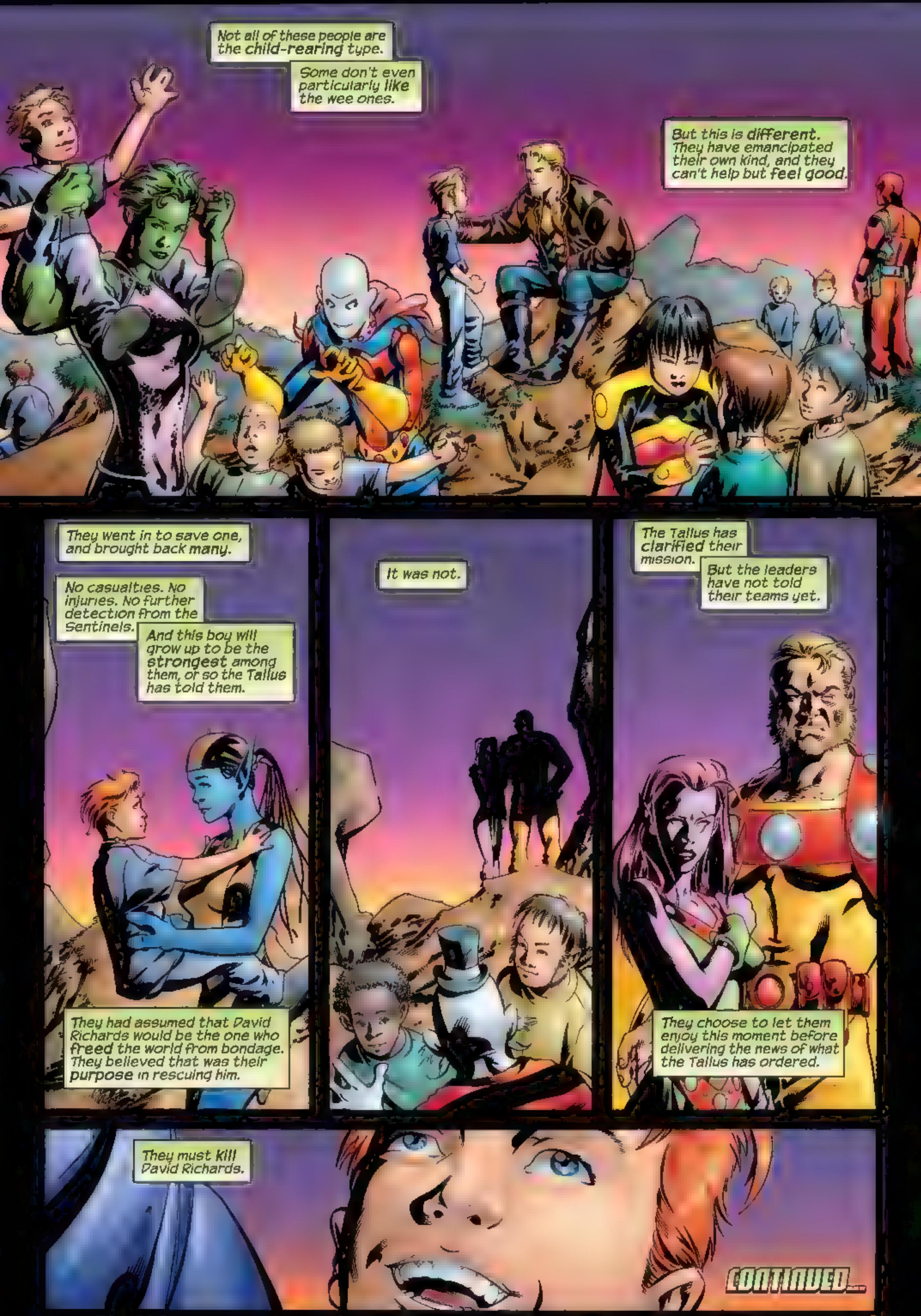

The Tallus had dropped them within thirty miles of the camp. Vision is able to get a lock on the prisoner's genetic signatures.
Vision then merely accesses the camp's mainframe and let his fingers do the walking.
TZAACACACAC
TZAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAACK
From there they get lucky that David Richards has managed to retain his own name and that the powers that be keep extensive files on all mutants and advanced humans.
So they know where he is. Then all they have to do is break him out.
Oh yeah, and they get to destroy a whole bunch of Sentinels for their trouble.
They are very different teams, but they all hate Sentinels.


Location verified and previously accessed schematics confirmed-- target is in sector three-- area nine.
Now, Clarice-- we're clustered enough in the fighting that they won't track our movements!
Another ten meters.
BLINK
Let's go! Now!!
Is this it?
BLINK
Yes.
Son of a...
Oh god... Mr. Creed it feels just like...
Yeah, pup. I'm sure it brings back some less than happy childhood memories.
Is the whole camp full of children?


No. Just areas *nine* through *fourteen.*
I have located the *Richards* child. Genetic or visual matches cannot be confirmed, but interfacing with the inhibitor collar *verifies*--
Get offa me!! Let *go!*
Put him *down,* you sack of bolts! He's a *little boy,* not a *specimen.*
Besides, I'm pretty sure he *hates* androids.
Okay Clarice, we've got him - let's bolt.
I don't know, Mr. Creed...
...no... I *can't* leave it like this.
No, Clarice-- we should stick to the *mission.*
It'll be *more* than we can handle if--
I bet you didn't say that when you rescued *me.* Besides--


"...I think fate is telling me that I *owe* this."
Damn it! If you would just have *listened* to me-- Clarice, we can't run a *daycare center* up here!
We've *completed* the mission! We're *gone!* What are these children going to do out here on their own?
You mean these kids who've been raised in *adversity* and *war* their whole lives?
They'll do a damn sight better out on their *own* than in those *camps!*
BLINK!
You're getting *soft,* sir.
Shut up.
You're just ticked because I'm *right.*
Shut up.
If I'm--
Hey... are you getting this?
Yeah... the Talius says... we're *not done...*
Damn it all to hell.
This *can't* be what it wants.
You know it is...


Okay, team- I got the word! Baby bird has a new nest-- get set for transport!
Oh man-- I was just getting into this!
CREEE-OOOOOOK
It's not every day that one gets to tear apart evil artificial lifeforms with complete abandon.
Wow, Sasquatch. You can really make butt-kicking sound clinical and dull!
BLINK!
Quiet, Morph.
It's time to go.
BLIIINK
Geez, who spit in your cocoa? We won, hotpants!


Not all of these people are the child-rearing type.
Some don't even particularly like the wee ones.
But this is different. They have emancipated their own kind, and they can't help but feel good.
They went in to save one, and brought back many.
No casualties. No injuries. No further detection from the Sentinels.
And this boy will grow up to be the strongest among them, or so the Tallus has told them.
They had assumed that David Richards would be the one who freed the world from bondage. They believed that was their purpose in rescuing him.
It was not.
The Tallus has clarified their mission.
But the leaders have not told their teams yet.
They choose to let them enjoy this moment before delivering the news of what the Tallus has ordered.
They must kill David Richards.
CONTINUED...

"EXILES is my favorite book on the stands." – Ain't It Cool News
EXILES
MARVEL
PG
13
WINICK
McKONE
HOLDREDGE
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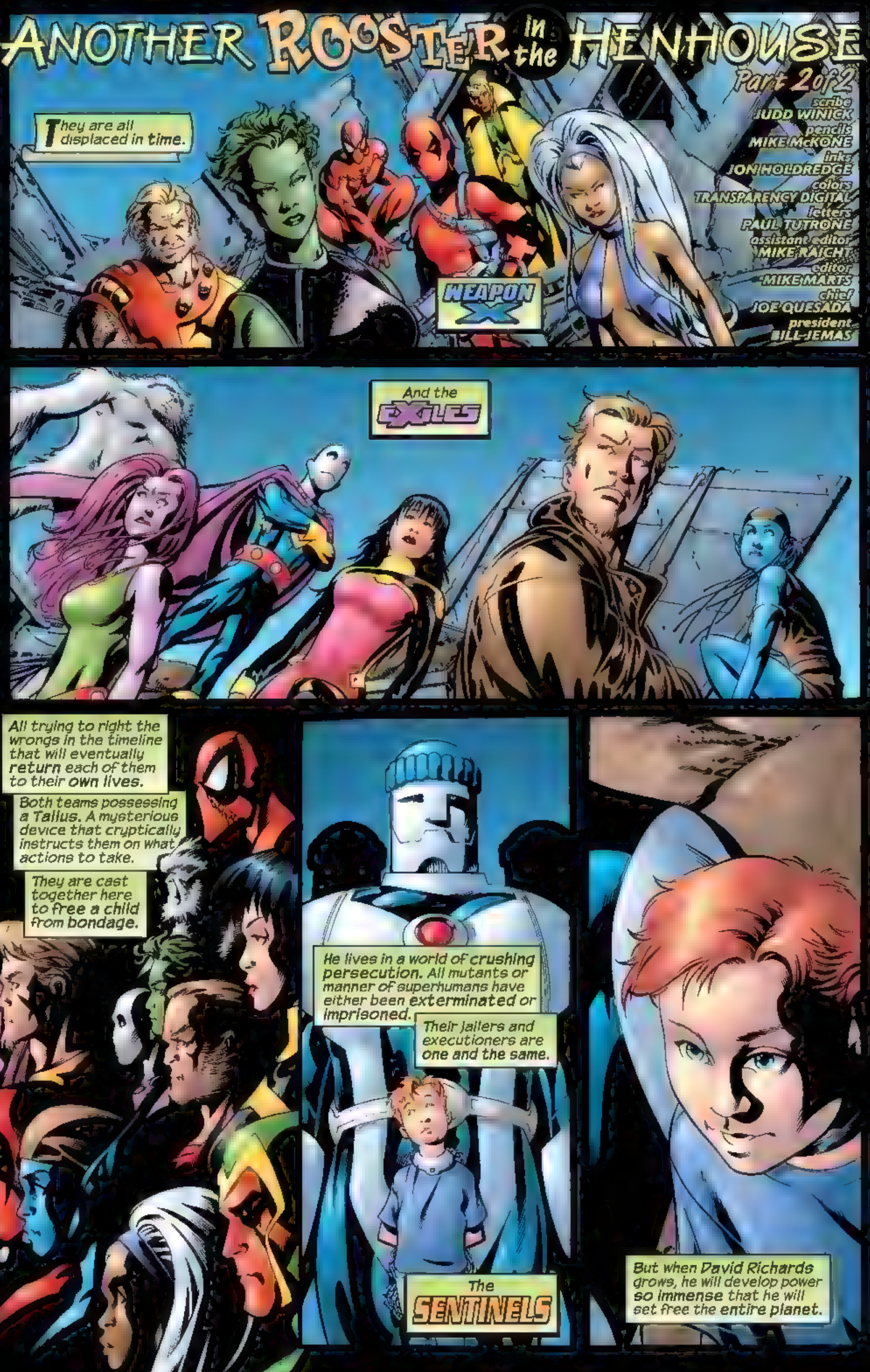
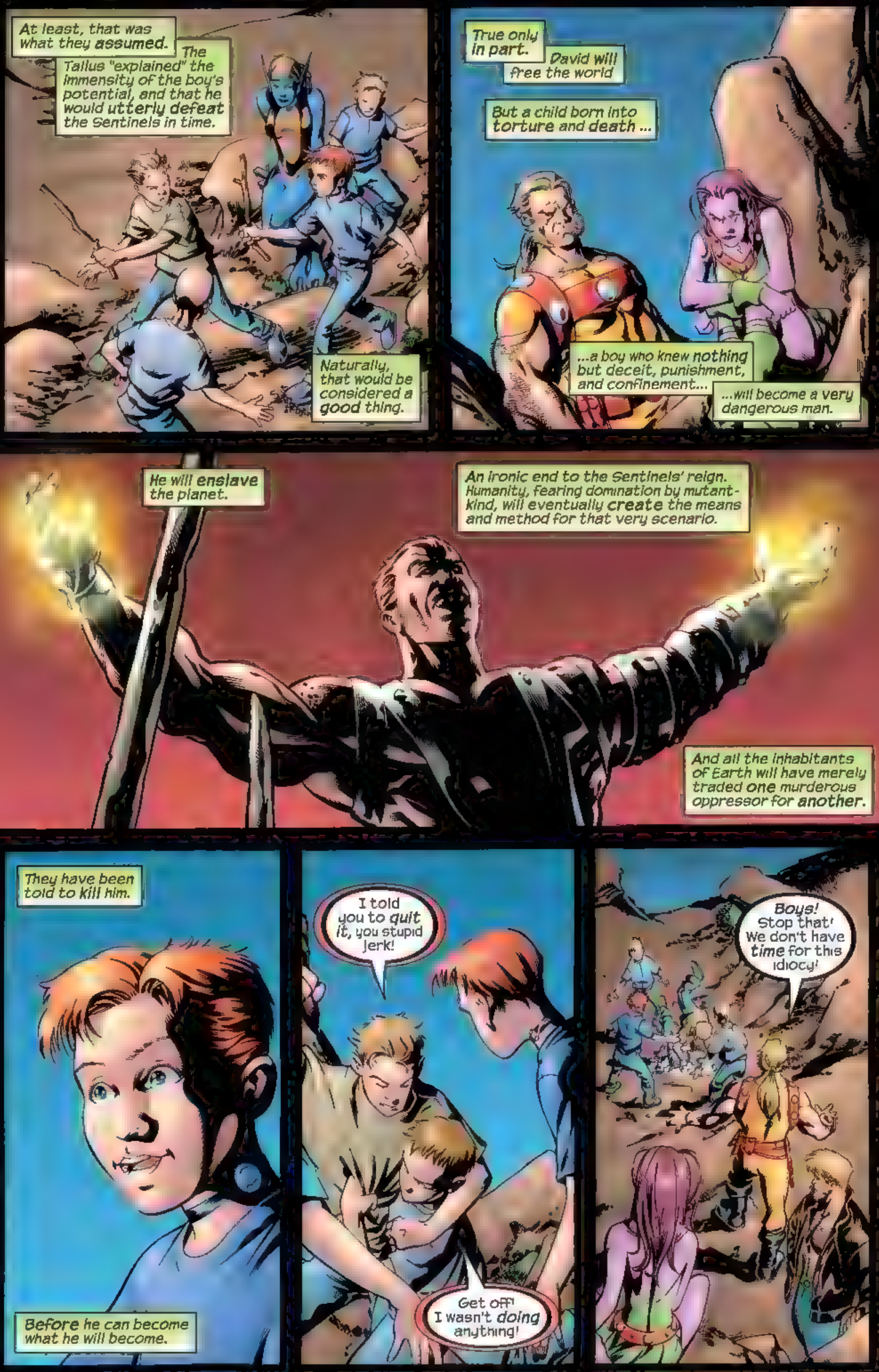
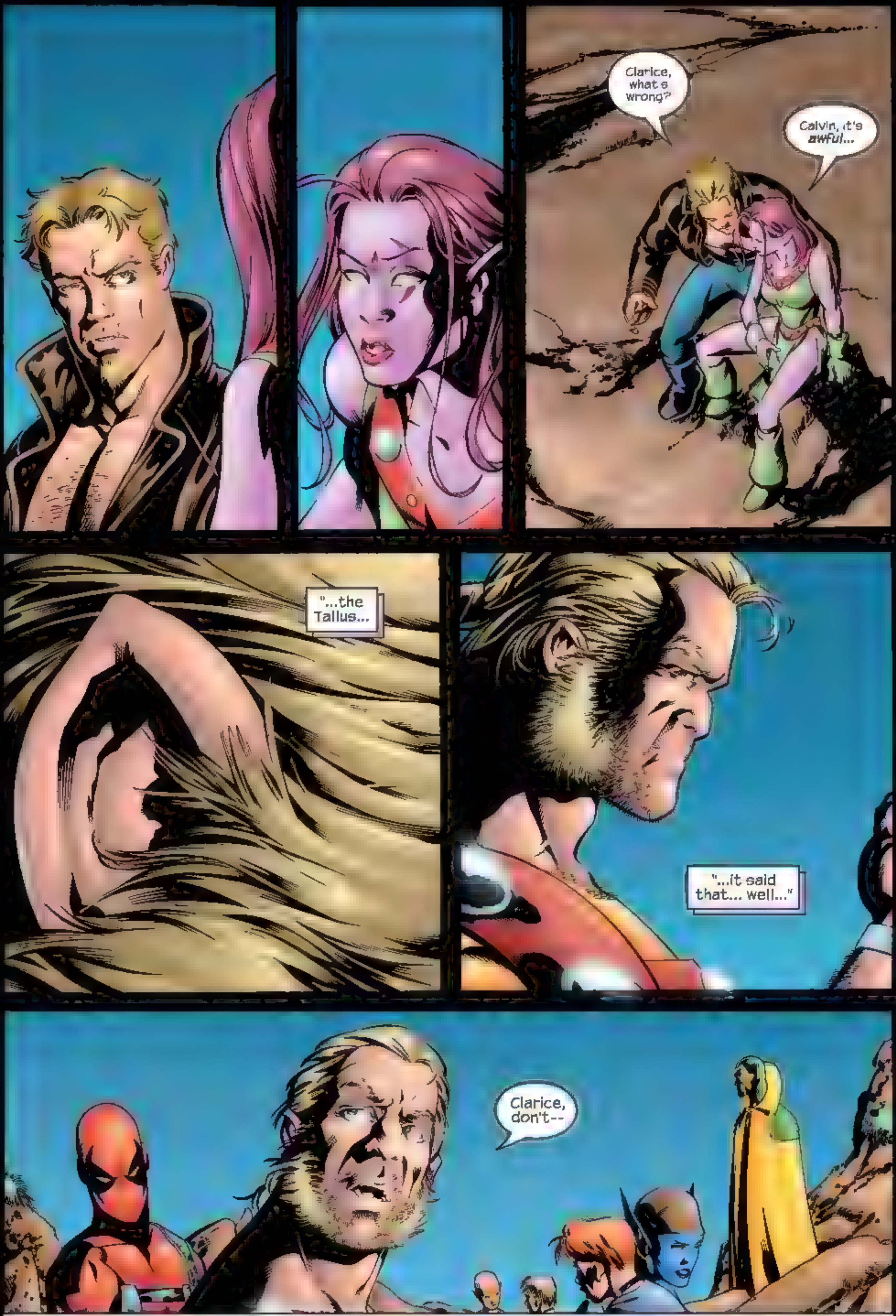

ANOTHER ROOSTER in the HENHOUSE
Part 2 of 2
scribe JUDD WINICK
pencils MIKE McKONE
inks JON HOLDREDGE
colors TRANSPARENCY DIGITAL
letters PAUL TUTRONE
assistant editor MIKE RAICHT
editor MIKE MARTS
chief JOE QUESADA
president BILL JEMAS
They are all displaced in time.
WEAPON X
And the EXILES
All trying to right the wrongs in the timeline that will eventually return each of them to their own lives.
Both teams possessing a Tallus. A mysterious device that cryptically instructs them on what actions to take.
They are cast together here to free a child from bondage.
He lives in a world of crushing persecution. All mutants or manner of superhumans have either been exterminated or imprisoned.
Their jailers and executioners are one and the same.
The SENTINELS
But when David Richards grows, he will develop power so immense that he will set free the entire planet.


At least, that was what they assumed.
The Tallus "explained" the immensity of the boy's potential, and that he would utterly defeat the Sentinels in time.
Naturally, that would be considered a good thing.
True only in part.
David will free the world
But a child born into torture and death ...
...a boy who knew nothing but deceit, punishment, and confinement...
...will become a very dangerous man.
He will enslave the planet.
An ironic end to the Sentinels' reign. Humanity, fearing domination by mutantkind, will eventually create the means and method for that very scenario.
And all the inhabitants of Earth will have merely traded one murderous oppressor for another.
They have been told to kill him.
Before he can become what he will become.
I told you to quit it, you stupid jerk!
Get off! I wasn't doing anything!
Boys! Stop that! We don't have time for this idiocy!


Clarice, what's wrong?
Calvin, it's awful...
"...the Tallus...
"...it said that... well..."
Clarice, don't--

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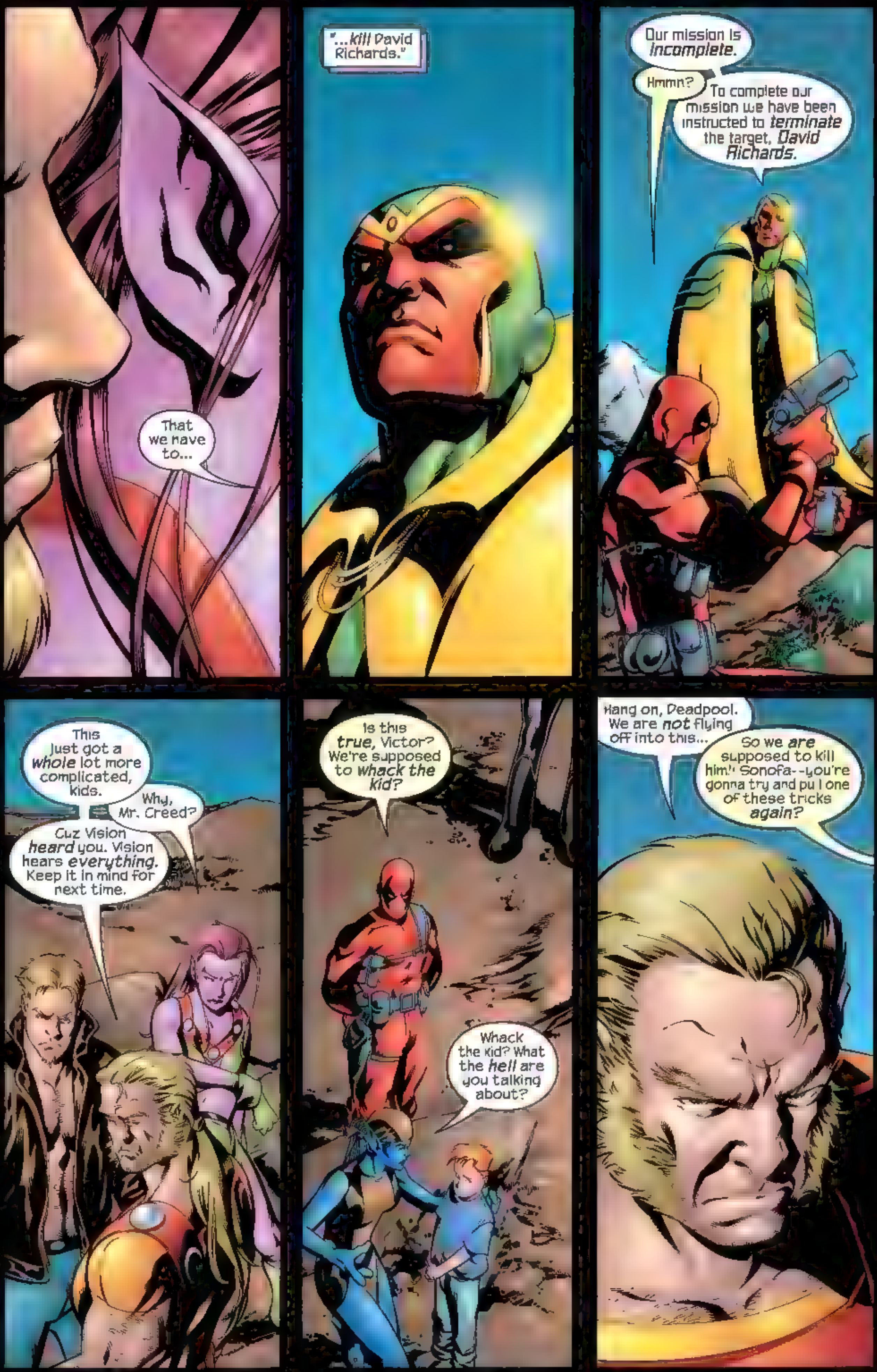
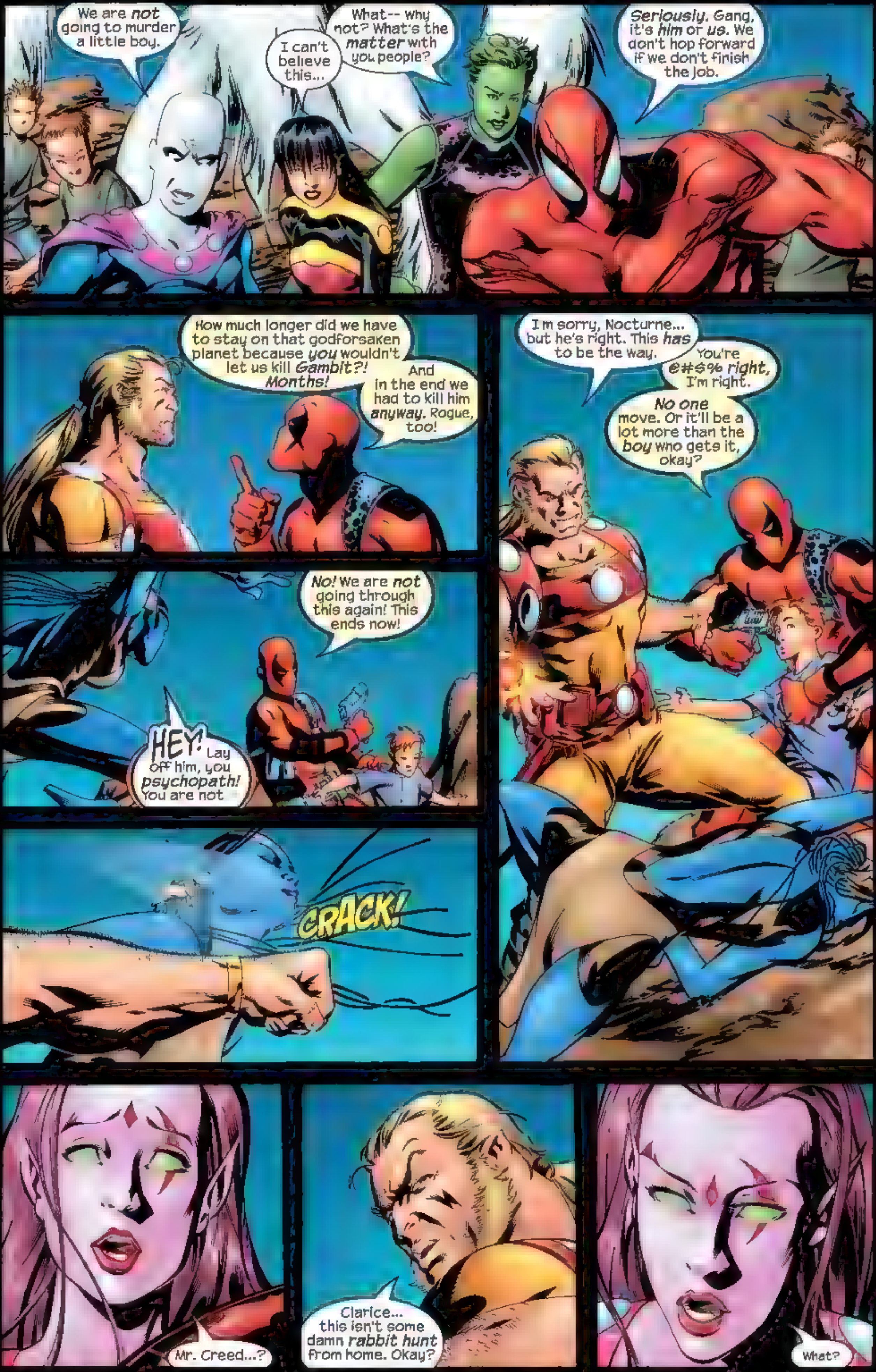
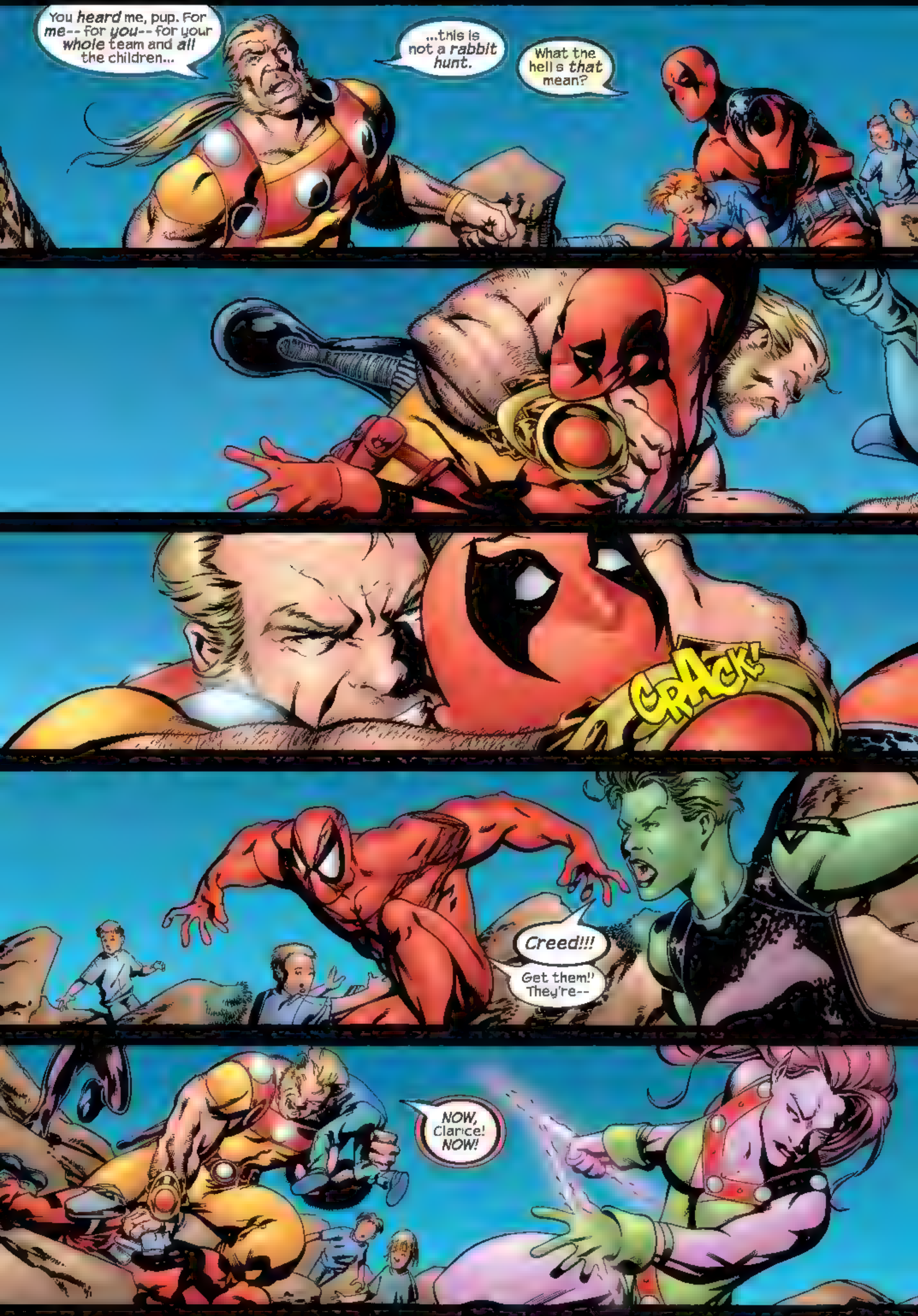
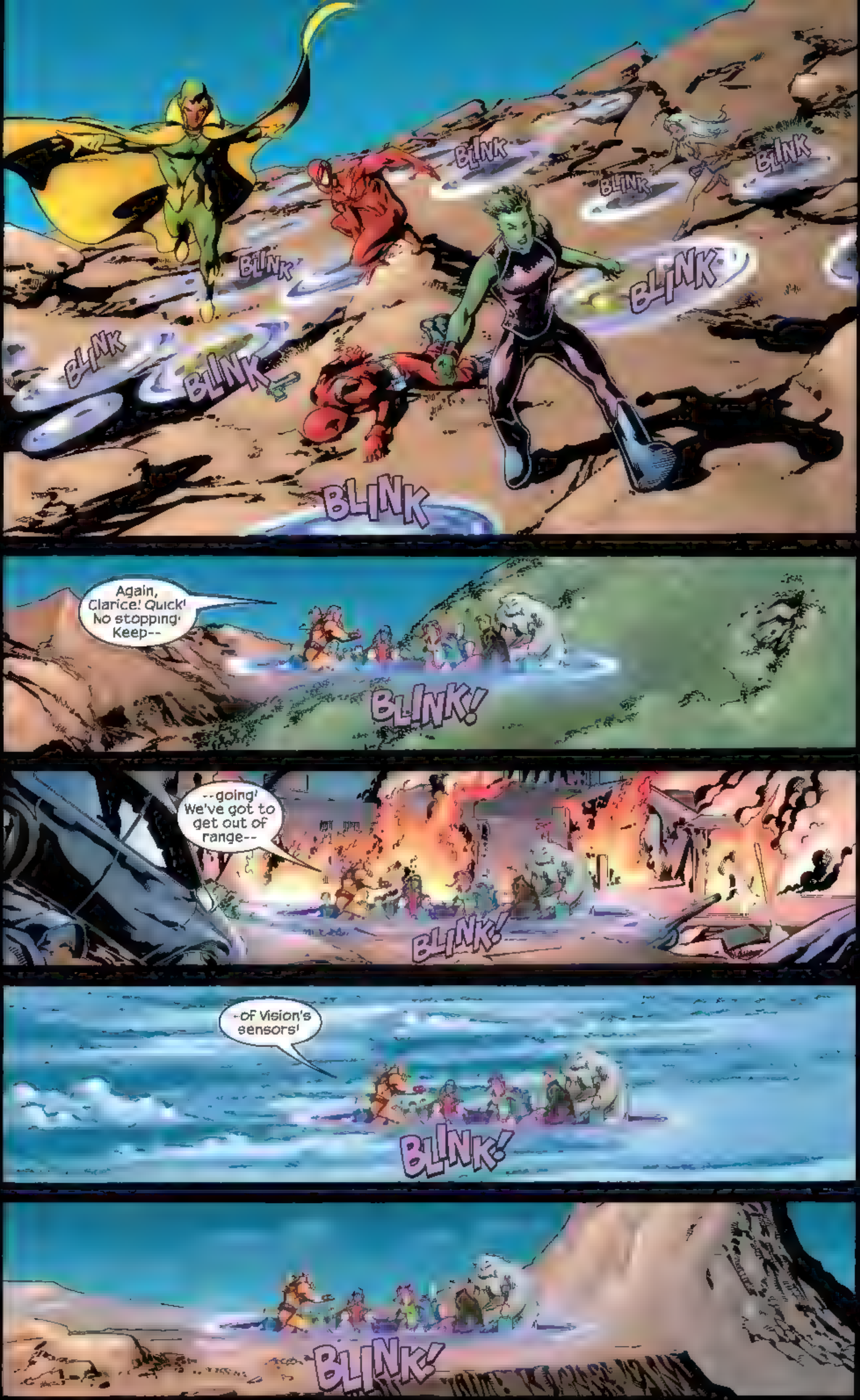
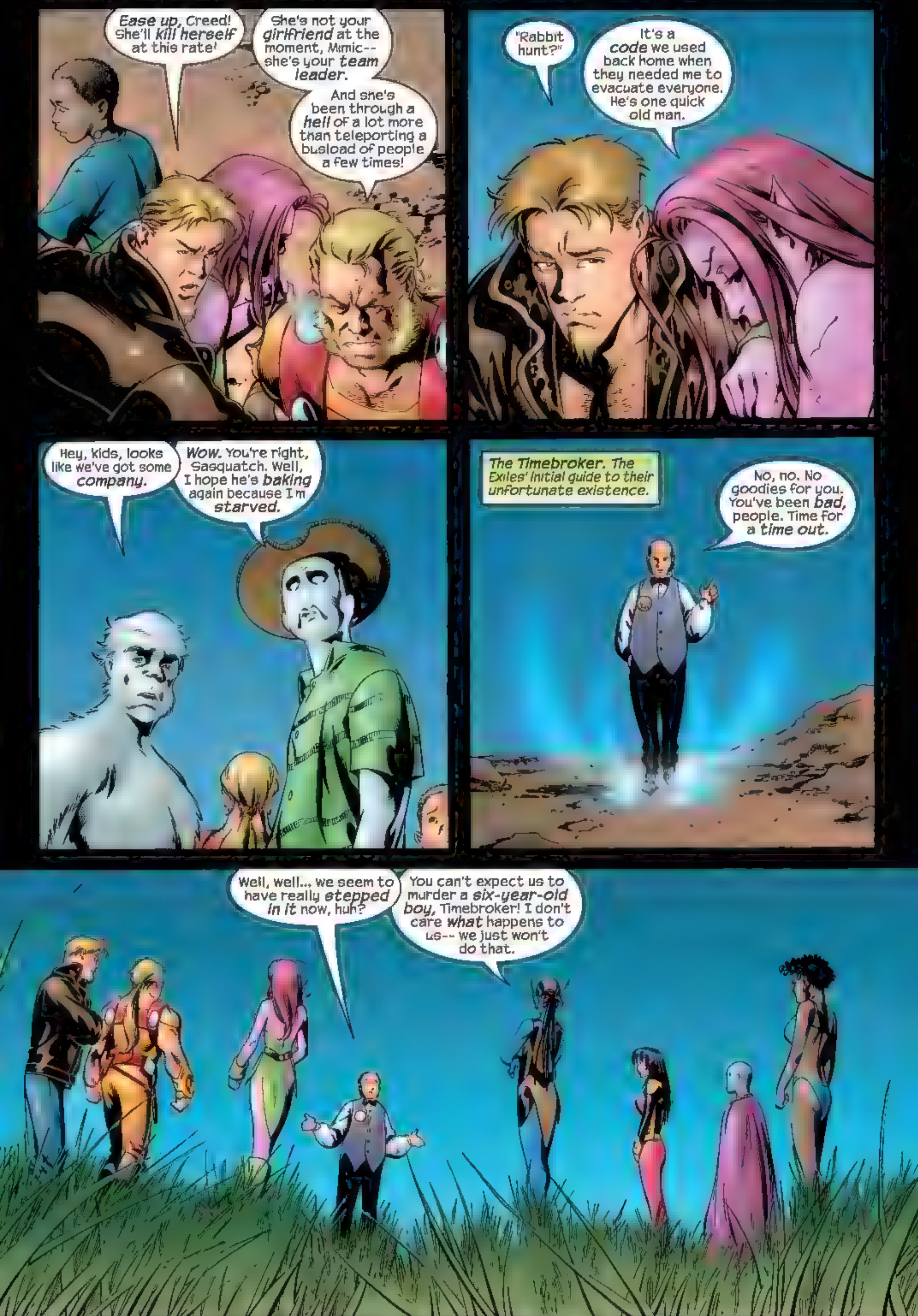
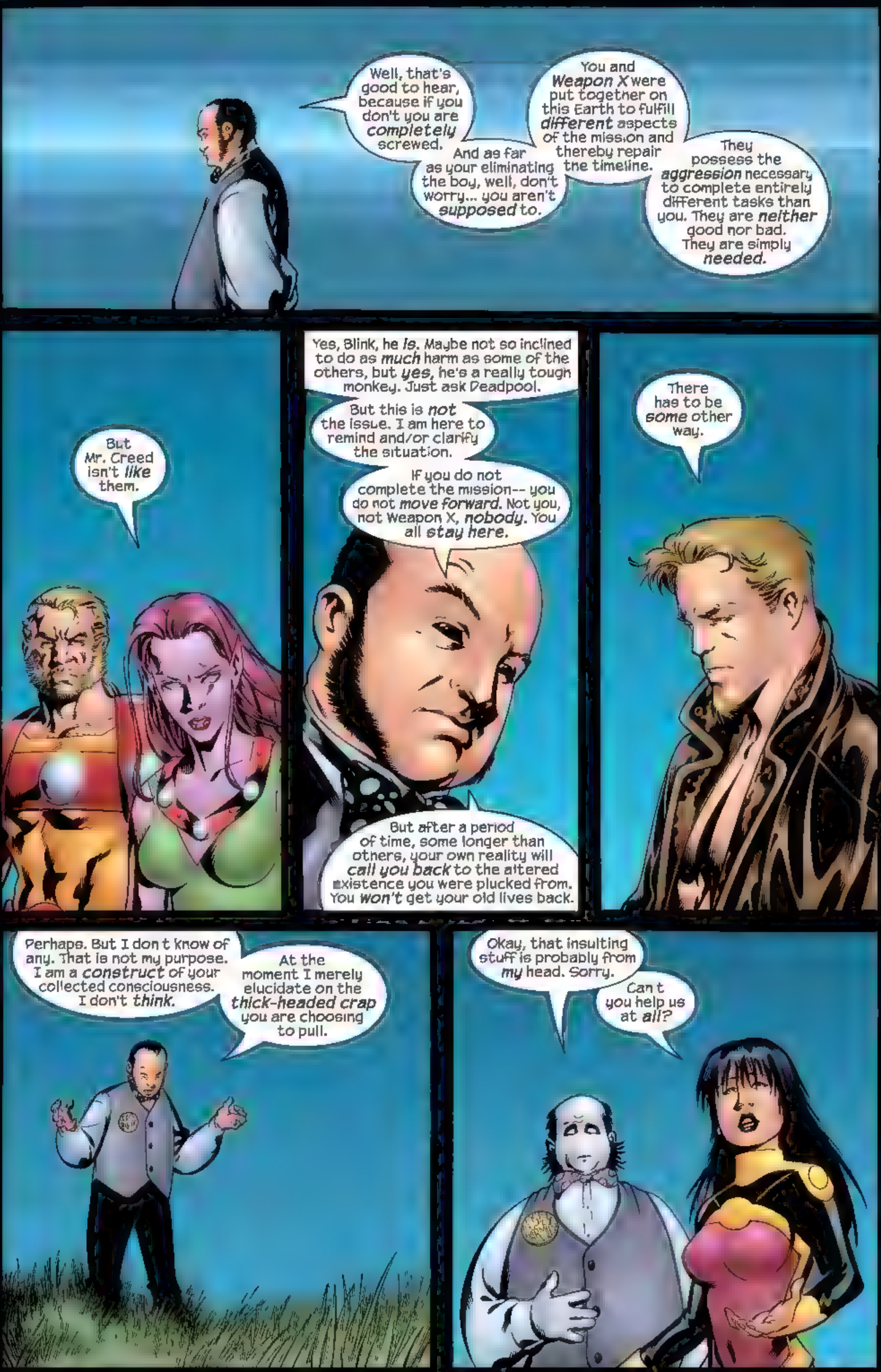

That we have to...
"...kill David Richards."
Our mission is incomplete.
Hmmn?
To complete our mission we have been instructed to terminate the target, David Richards.
This just got a whole lot more complicated, kids.
Why, Mr. Creed?
Cuz Vision heard you. Vision hears everything. Keep it in mind for next time.
Is this true, Victor? We're supposed to whack the kid?
Whack the kid? What the hell are you talking about?
Hang on, Deadpool. We are not flying off into this...
So we are supposed to kill him! Sonofa--you're gonna try and pull one of these tricks again?

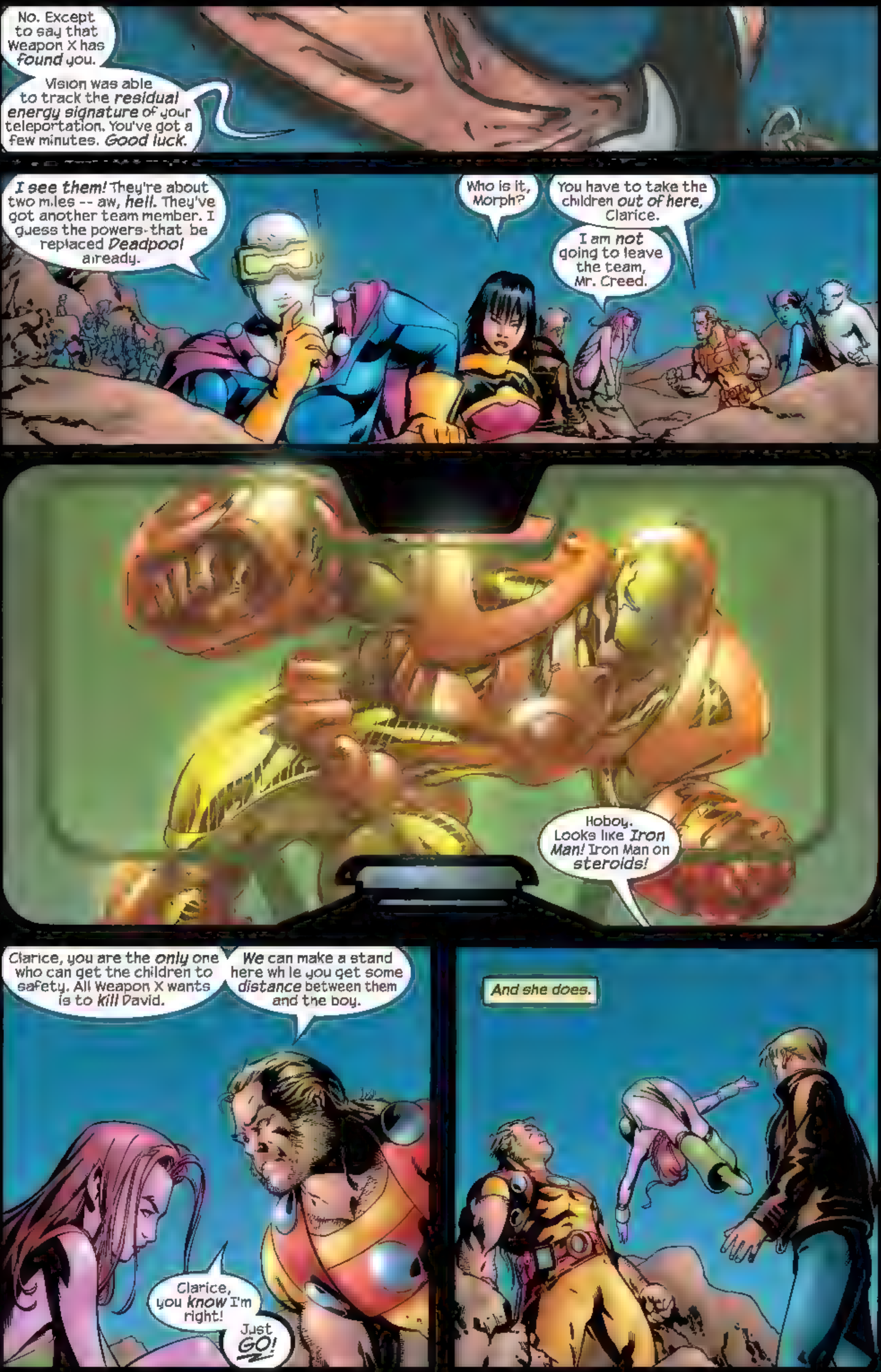

We are *not* going to murder a little boy.
I can't believe this...
What-- why not? What's the *matter* with you people?
Seriously. Gang, it's *him* or *us.* We don't hop forward if we don't finish the job.
How much longer did we have to stay on that godforsaken planet because *you* wouldn't let us kill *Gambit?! Months!*
And in the end we had to kill him *anyway.* Rogue, too!
I'm sorry, Nocturne... but he's right. This *has* to be the way.
You're *@#$% right,* I'm right.
No one move. Or it'll be a lot more than the *boy* who gets it, okay?
No! We are *not* going through this again! This ends now!
HEY! Lay off him, you *psychopath!* You are not
CRACK!
Mr. Creed...?
Clarice... this isn't some damn *rabbit hunt* from home. Okay?
What?

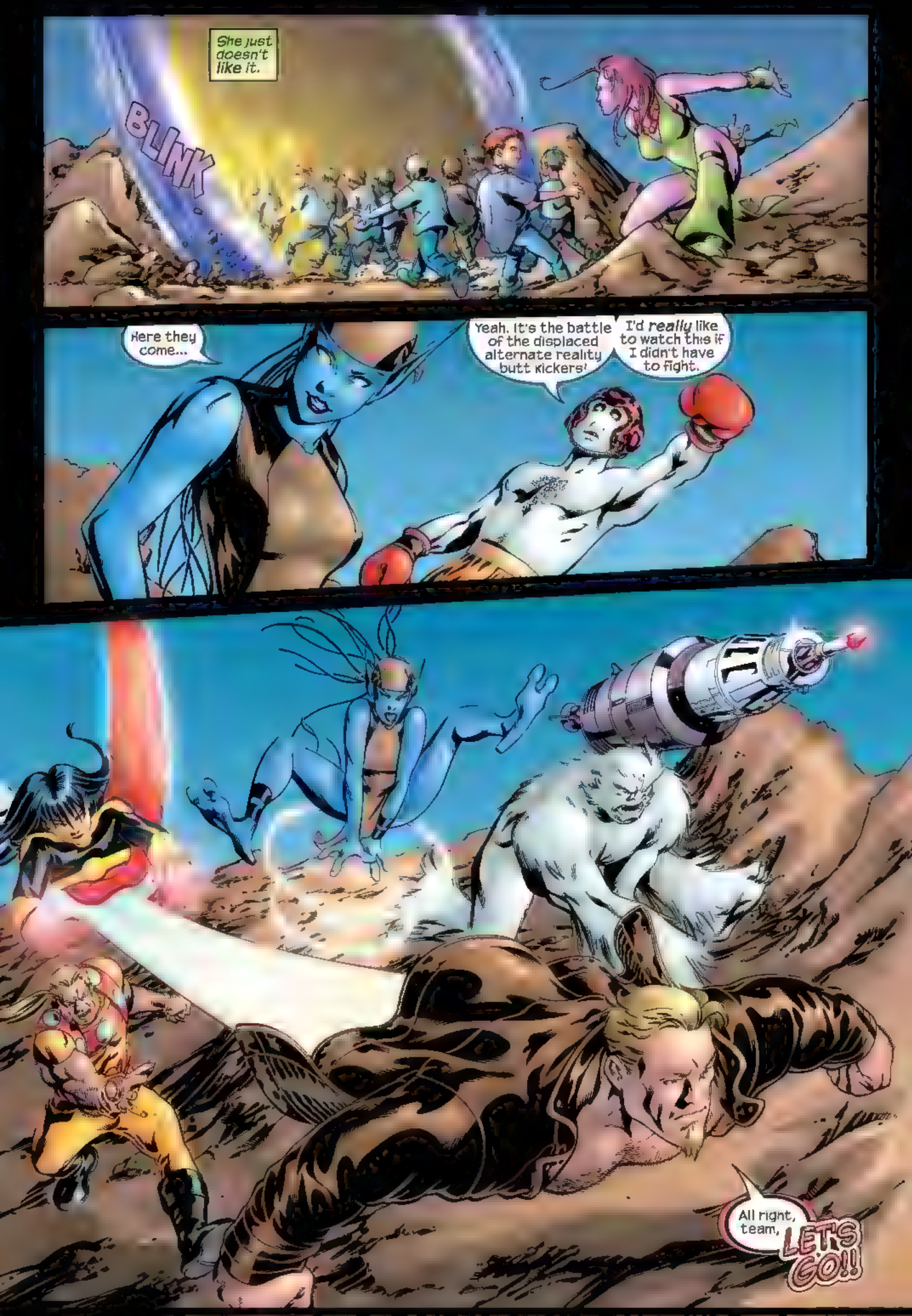

You *heard* me, pup. For *me*-- for *you*-- for your *whole* team and *all* the children...
...this is not a *rabbit hunt.*
What the hell's *that* mean?
CRACK!
Creed!!!
Get them! They're--
NOW, Clarice! *NOW!*

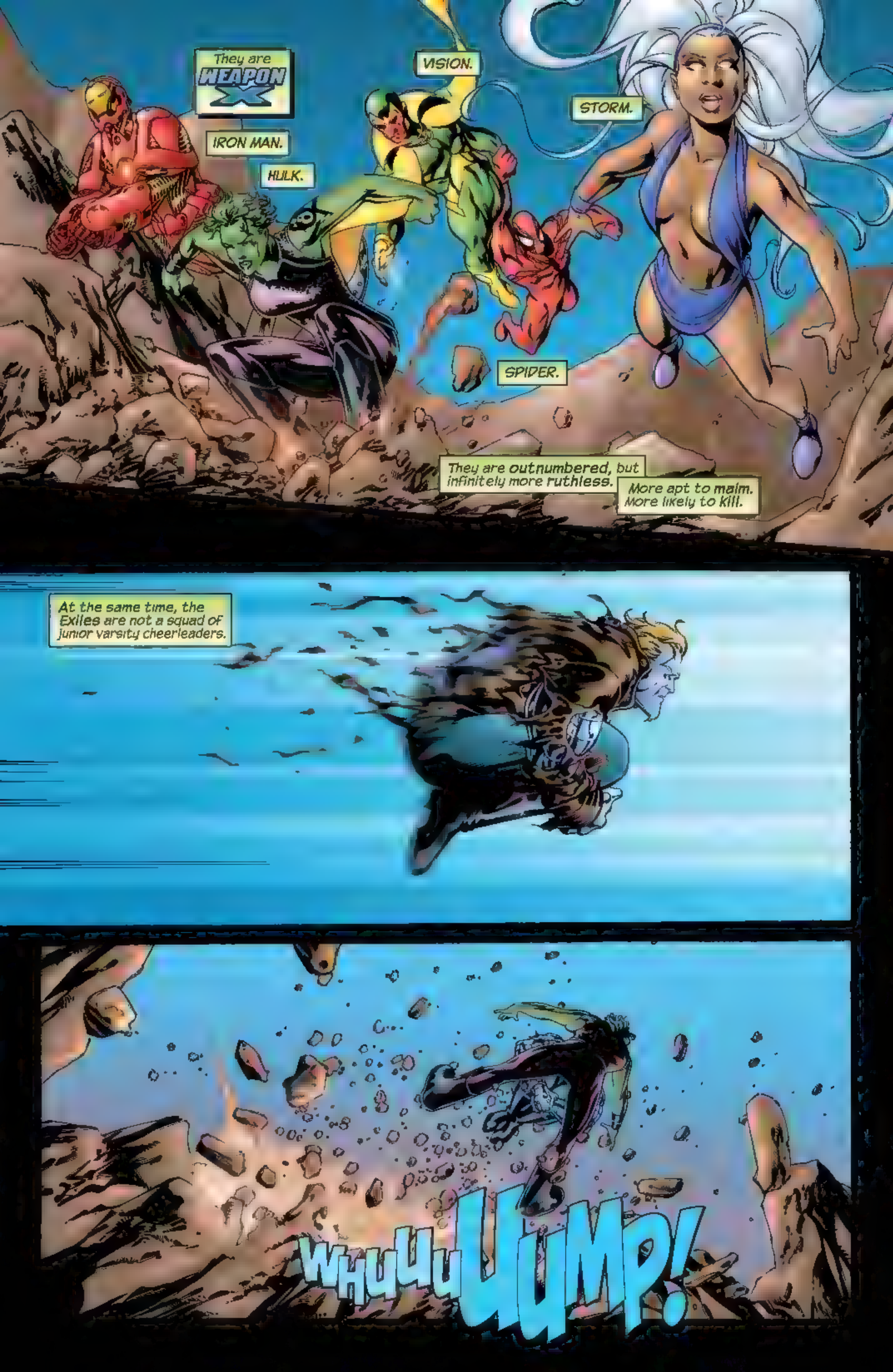

BLINK
BLINK
BLINK
BLINK
BLINK
BLINK
BLINK
BLINK
Again, Clarice! Quick! No stopping! Keep--
BLINK!
--going! We've got to get out of range--
BLINK!
--of Vision's sensors!
BLINK!
BLINK!

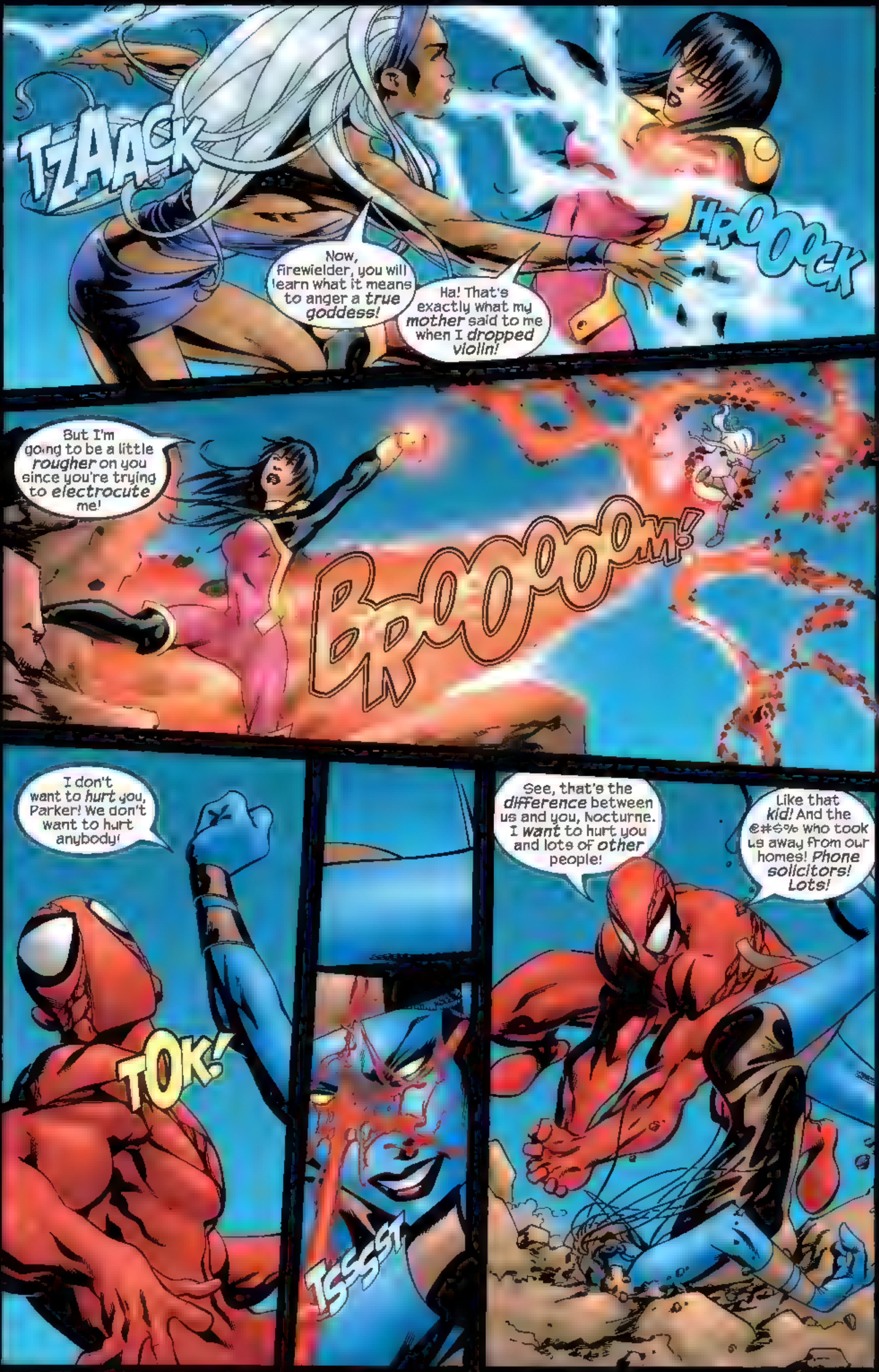

Ease up, Creed! She'll kill herself at this rate!
She's not your girlfriend at the moment, Mimic-- she's your team leader.
And she's been through a hell of a lot more than teleporting a busload of people a few times!
"Rabbit hunt?"
It's a code we used back home when they needed me to evacuate everyone. He's one quick old man.
Hey, kids, looks like we've got some company.
Wow. You're right, Sasquatch. Well, I hope he's baking again because I'm starved.
The Timebroker. The Exiles' initial guide to their unfortunate existence.
No, no. No goodies for you. You've been bad, people. Time for a time out.
Well, well... we seem to have really stepped in it now, huh?
You can't expect us to murder a six-year-old boy, Timebroker! I don't care what happens to us-- we just won't do that.

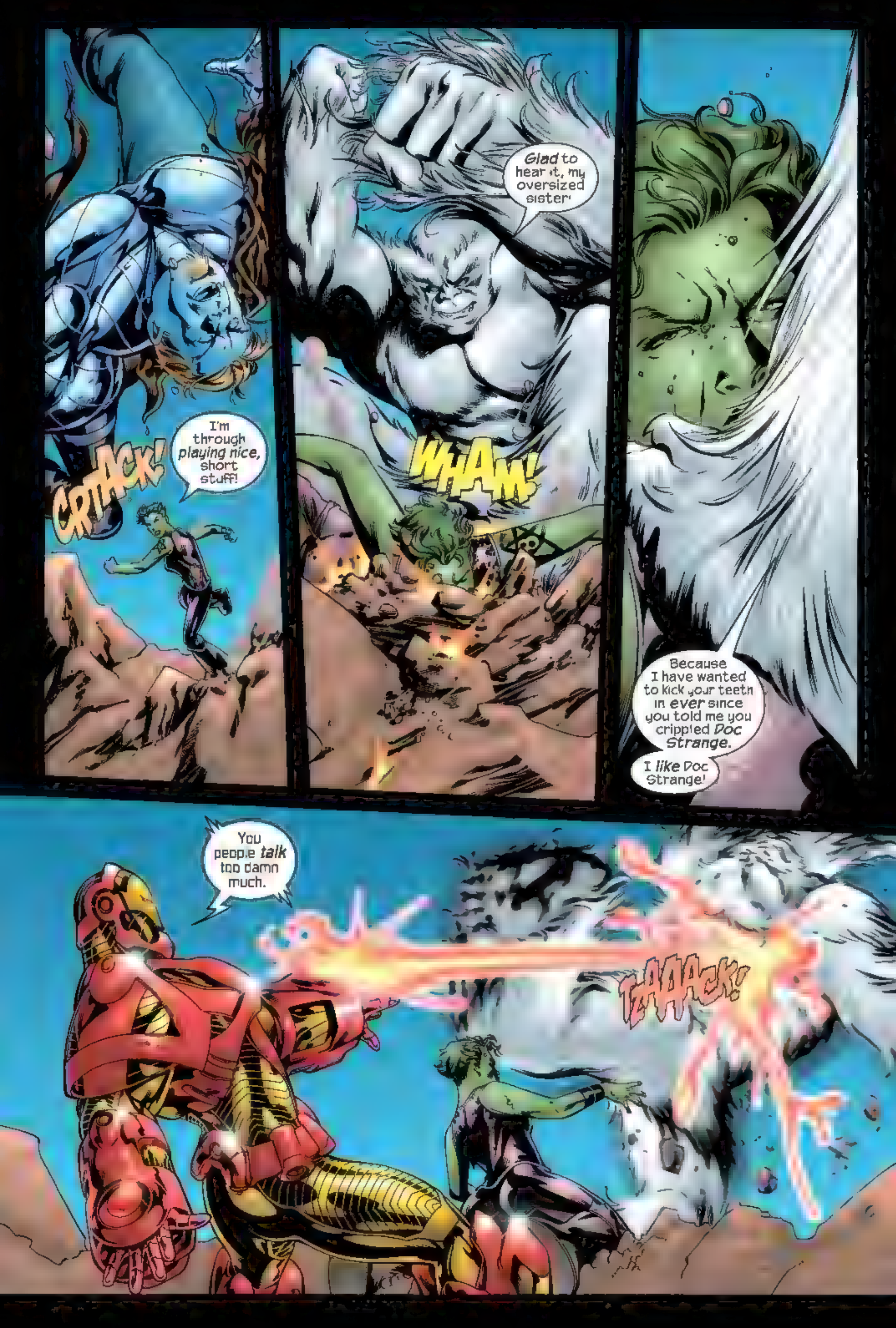

Well, that's good to hear, because if you don't you are *completely* screwed.
And as far as your eliminating the boy, well, don't worry... you aren't *supposed* to.
You and *Weapon X* were put together on this Earth to fulfill *different* aspects of the mission and thereby repair the timeline.
They possess the *aggression* necessary to complete entirely different tasks than you. They are *neither* good nor bad. They are simply *needed.*
But Mr. Creed isn't *like* them.
Yes, Blink, he *is.* Maybe not so inclined to do as *much* harm as some of the others, but *yes,* he's a really tough monkey. Just ask Deadpool.
But this is *not* the issue. I am here to remind and/or clarify the situation.
If you do not complete the mission-- you do not *move forward.* Not you, not Weapon X, *nobody.* You all *stay here.*
But after a period of time, some longer than others, your own reality will *call you back* to the altered existence you were plucked from. You *won't* get your old lives back.
There has to be *some* other way.
Perhaps. But I don't know of any. That is not my purpose. I am a *construct* of your collected consciousness. I don't *think.*
At the moment I merely elucidate on the *thick-headed crap* you are choosing to pull.
Okay, that insulting stuff is probably from *my* head. Sorry.
Can't you help us at *all?*

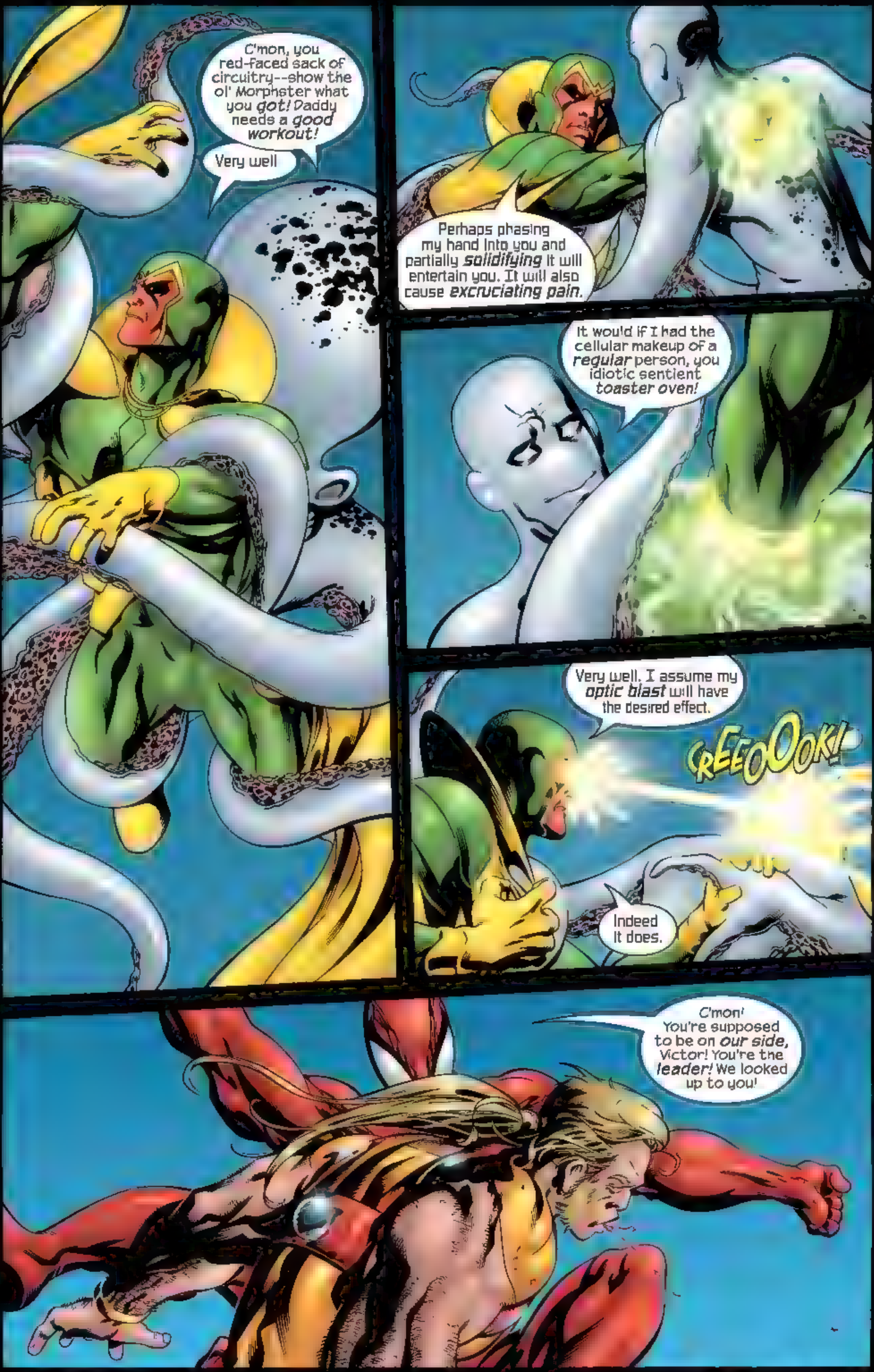

No. Except to say that Weapon X has *found* you.
Vision was able to track the *residual energy signature* of your teleportation. You've got a few minutes. *Good luck.*
I see them! They're about two miles -- aw, *hell.* They've got another team member. I guess the powers-that be replaced *Deadpool* already.
Who is it, Morph?
You have to take the children *out of here,* Clarice.
I am *not* going to leave the team, Mr. Creed.
Hoboy. Looks like *Iron Man!* Iron Man on *steroids!*
Clarice, you are the *only* one who can get the children to safety. All Weapon X wants is to *kill* David.
We can make a stand here while you get some *distance* between them and the boy.
Clarice, you *know* I'm right!
Just *GO!*
And she does.

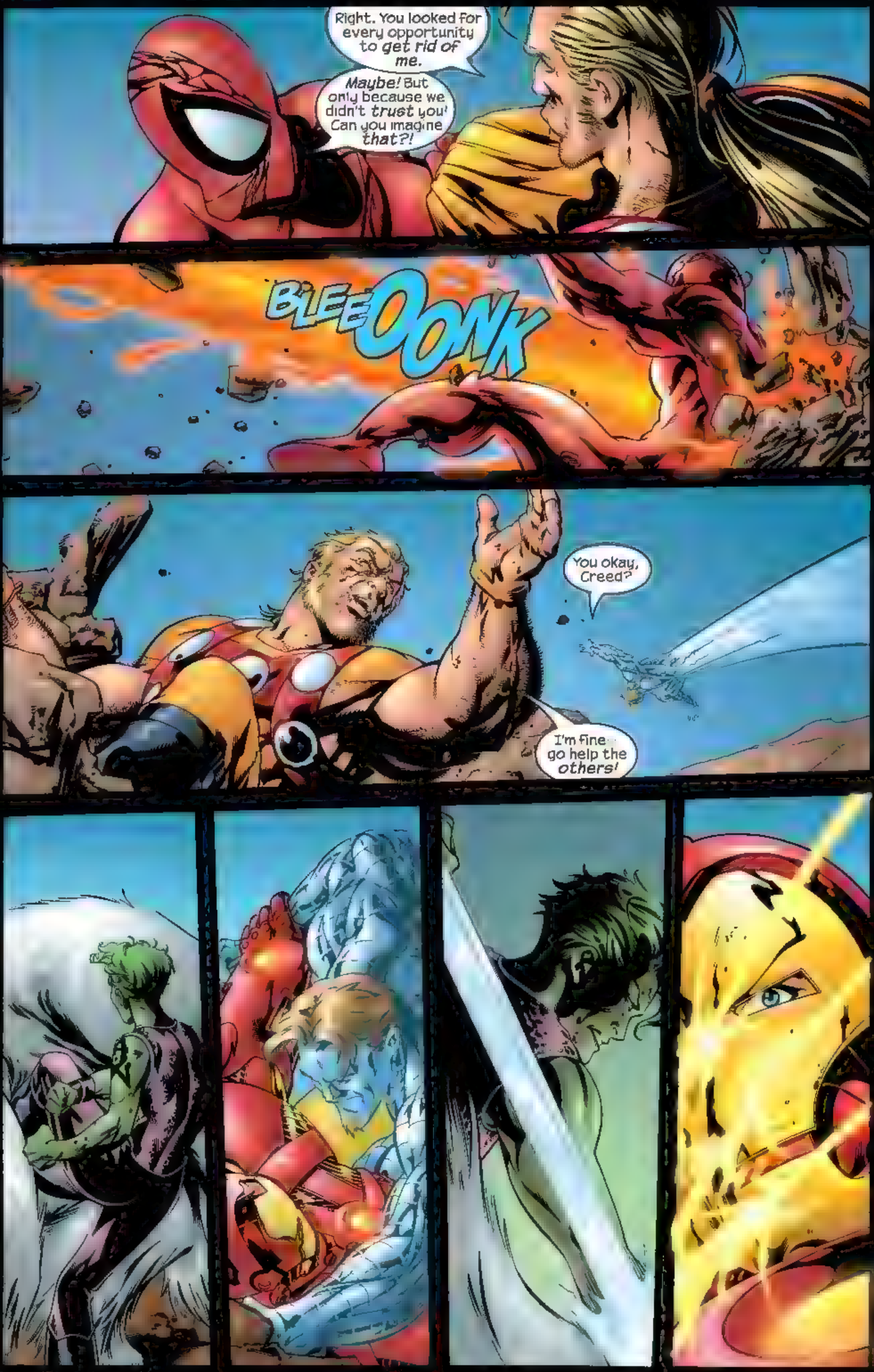

She just doesn't like it.
BLINK
Here they come...
Yeah. It's the battle of the displaced alternate reality butt kickers!
I'd *really* like to watch this if I didn't have to fight.
All right, team, LET'S GO!!

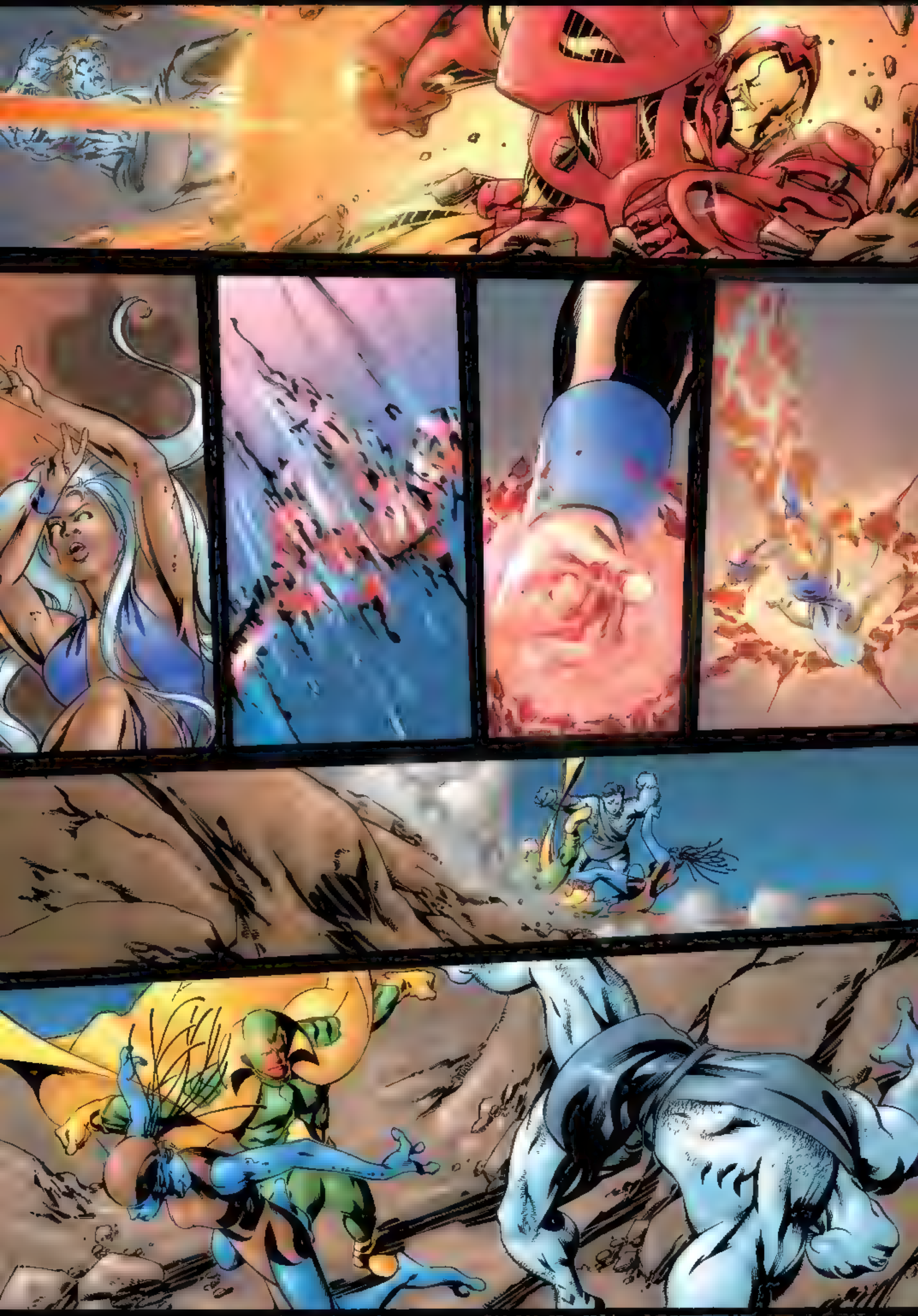

They are WEAPON X
IRON MAN.
HULK.
VISION.
STORM.
SPIDER.
They are outnumbered, but infinitely more ruthless.
More apt to maim. More likely to kill.
At the same time, the Exiles are not a squad of junior varsity cheerleaders.
WHUUUUUMP!

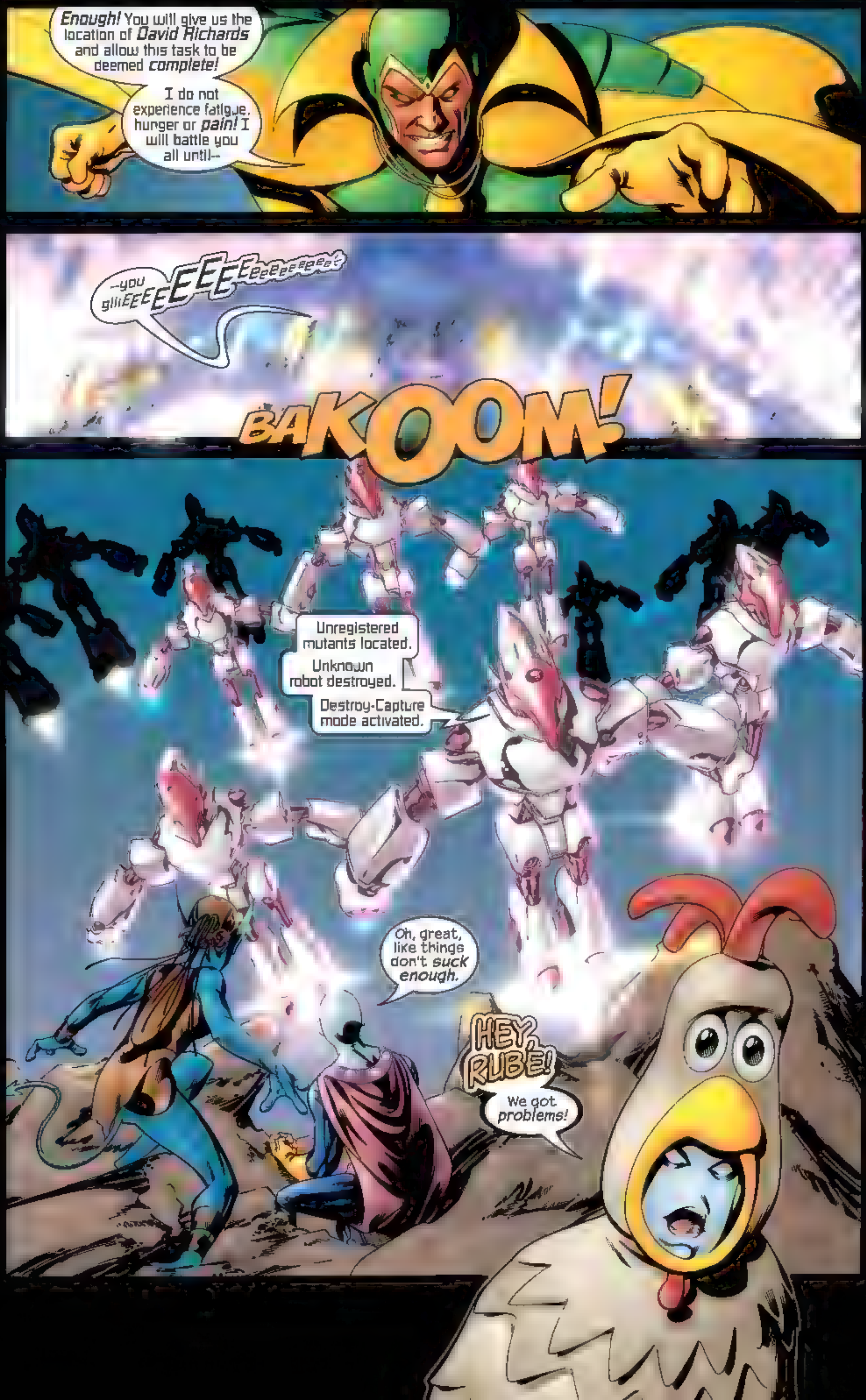

TZAACK
Now, Firewielder, you will learn what it means to anger a *true goddess!*
Ha! That's exactly what my *mother* said to me when I *dropped violin!*
HROOOCK
But I'm going to be a little *rougher* on you since you're trying to *electrocute* me!
BROOOOOM!
I don't want to *hurt* you, Parker! We don't want to hurt anybody!
TOK!
TSSSST
See, that's the *difference* between us and you, Nocturne. I *want* to hurt you and lots of *other* people!
Like that *kid!* And the @#$% who took us away from our homes! *Phone solicitors! Lots!*

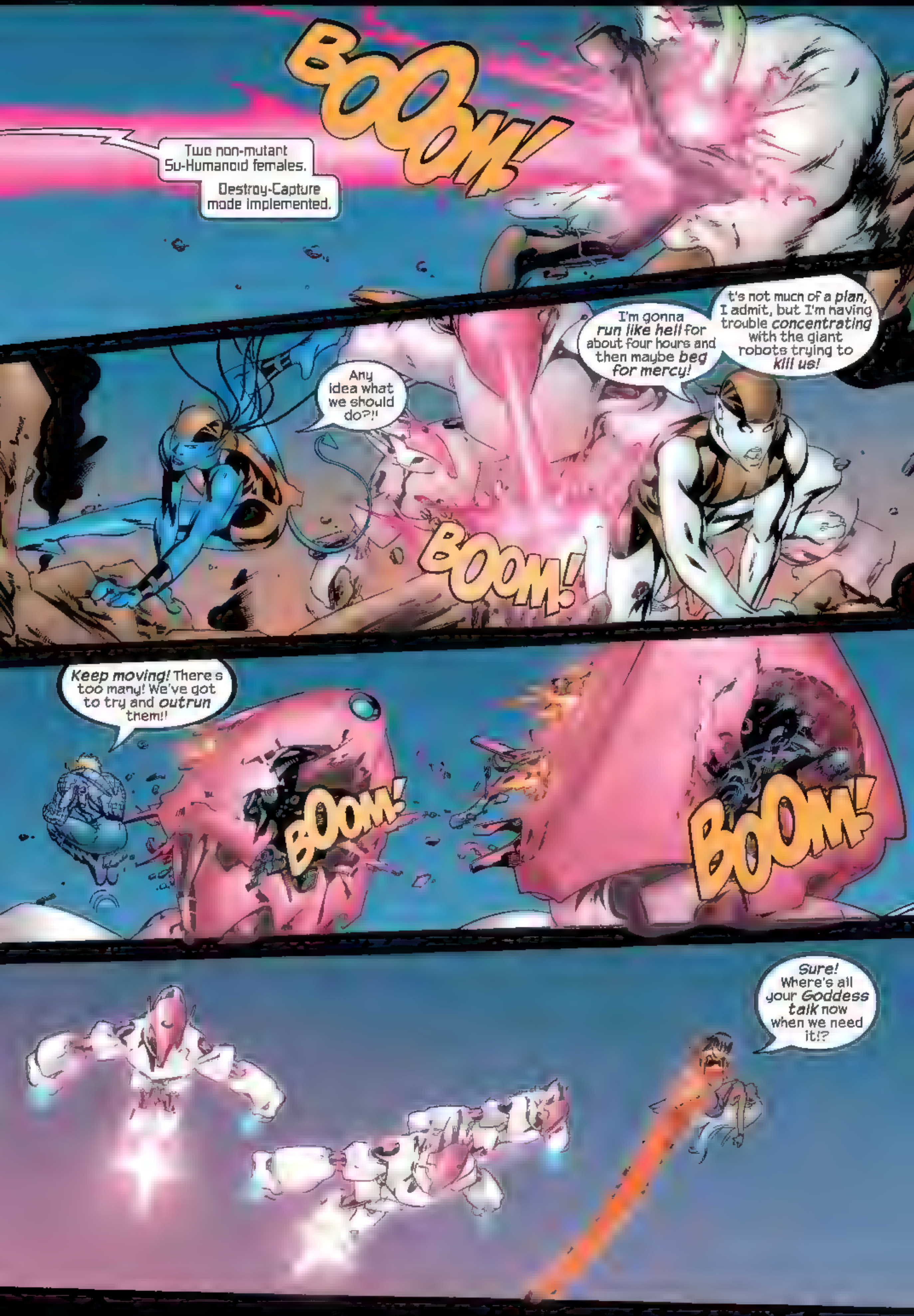

CRTACK!
I'm through *playing nice,* short stuff!
Glad to hear it, my oversized sister!
WHAM!
Because I have wanted to kick your teeth in *ever* since you told me you crippled *Doc Strange.*
I *like* Doc Strange!
You people *talk* too damn much.
TZAAACK!

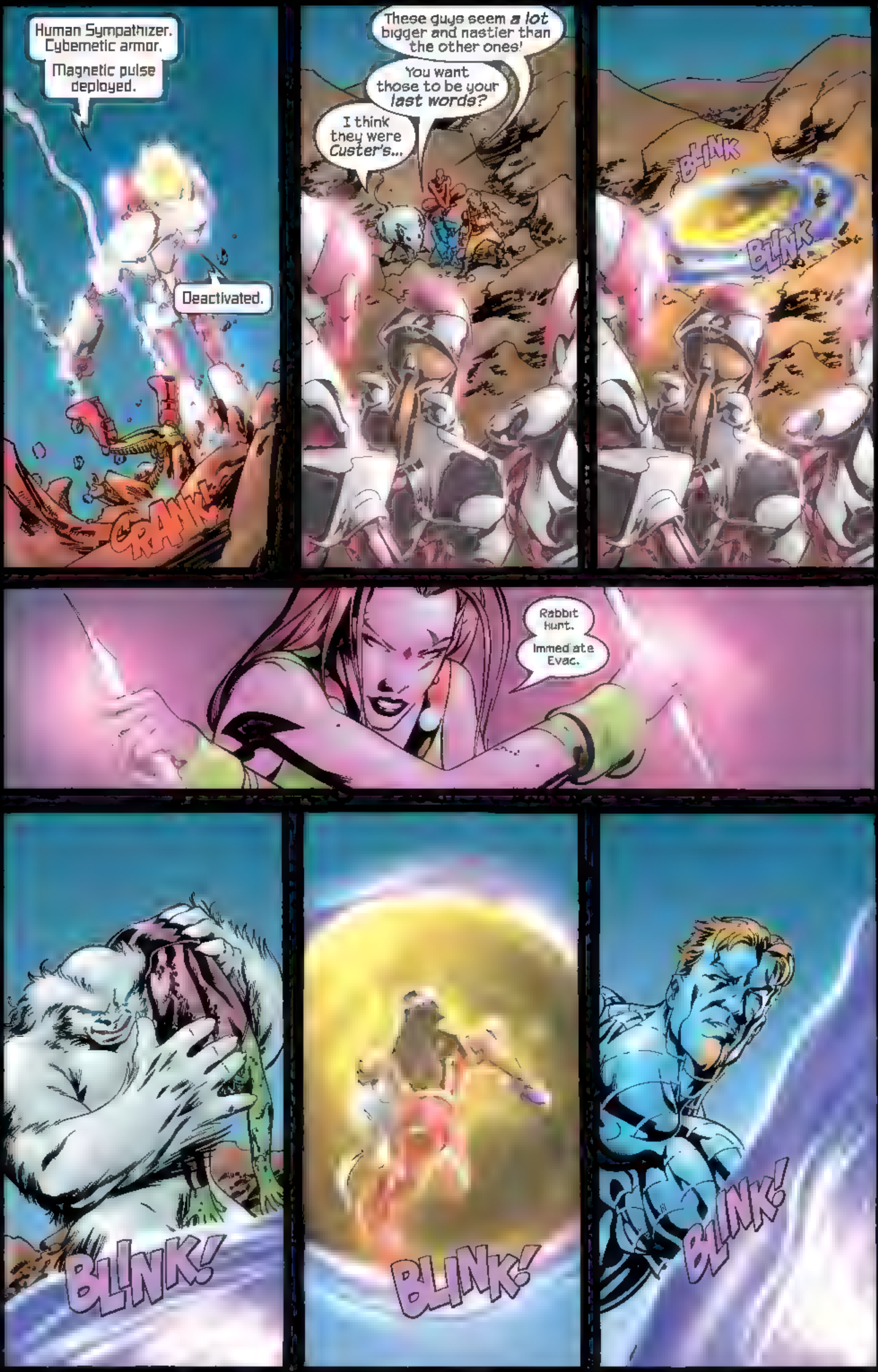

C'mon, you red-faced sack of circuitry--show the ol' Morphster what you *got!* Daddy needs a *good workout!*
Very well
Perhaps phasing my hand into you and partially *solidifying* it will entertain you. It will also cause *excruciating pain.*
It would if I had the cellular makeup of a *regular* person, you idiotic sentient *toaster oven!*
Very well. I assume my *optic blast* will have the desired effect.
CREEOOOK!
Indeed it does.
C'mon! You're supposed to be on *our side,* Victor! You're the *leader!* We looked up to you!

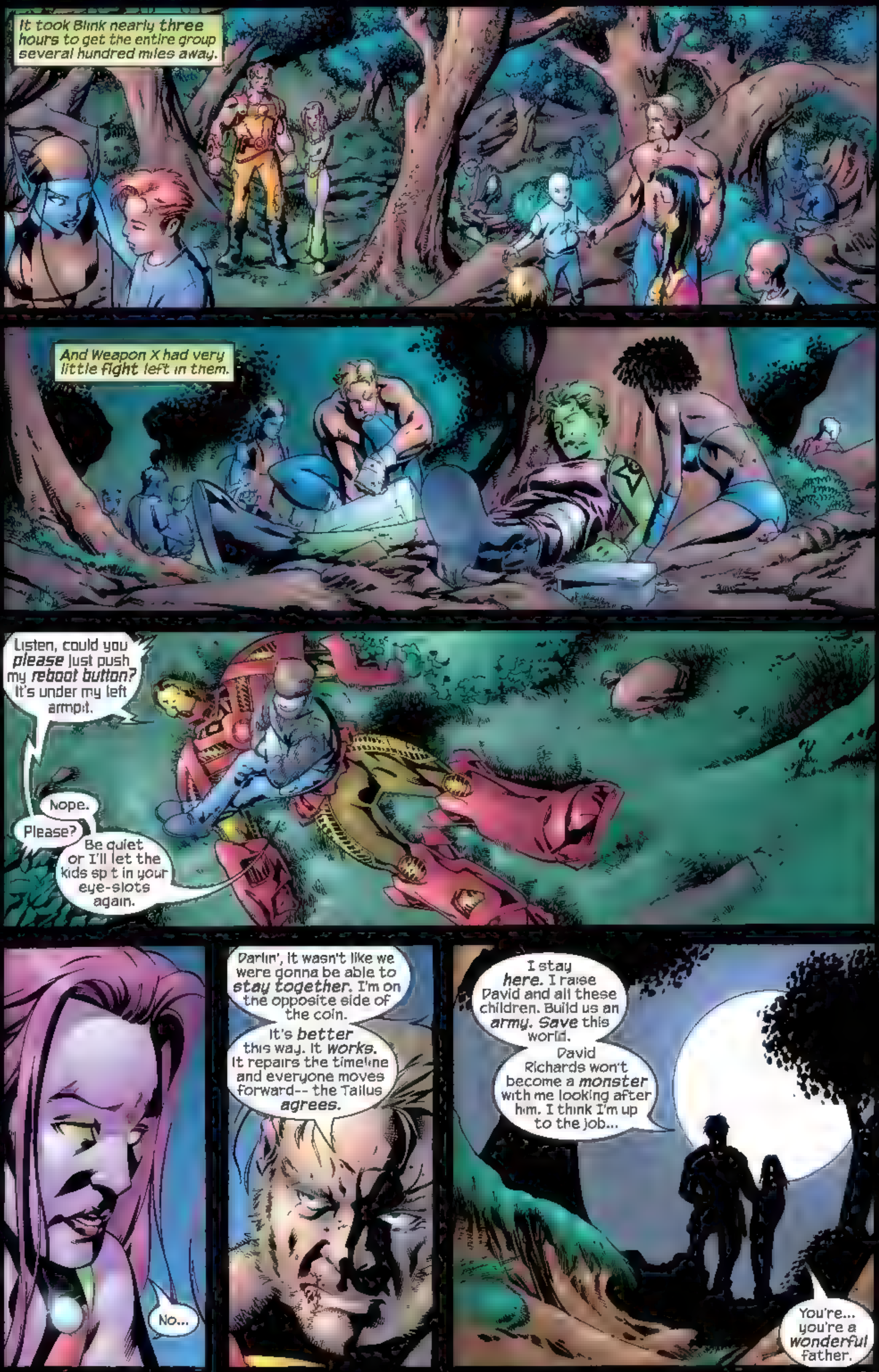

Right. You looked for every opportunity to *get rid of me.*
Maybe! But only because we didn't *trust* you! Can you imagine *that?!*
BLEEOONK
You okay, Creed?
I'm fine-- go help the *others!*

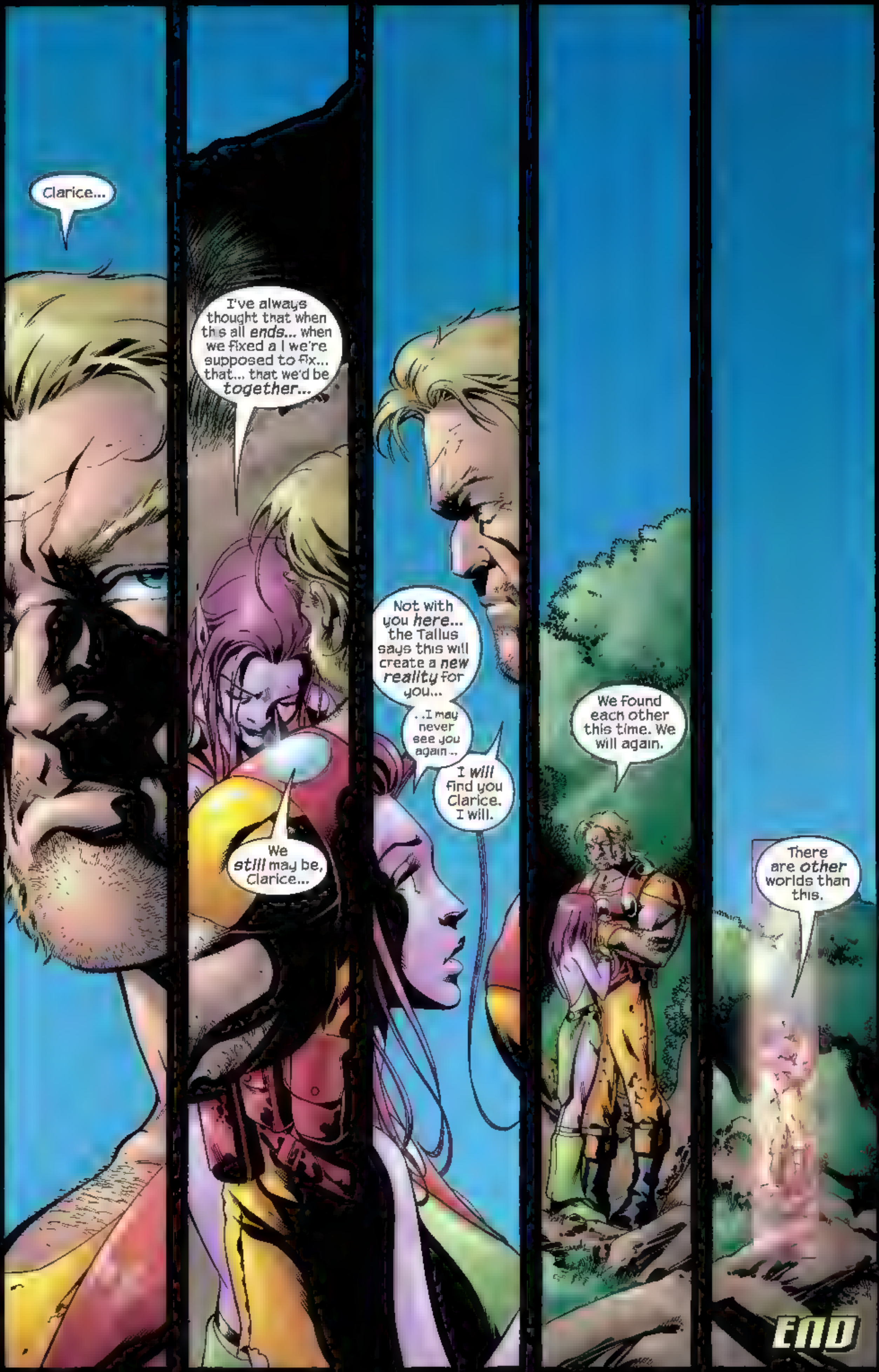



Enough! You will give us the location of David Richards and allow this task to be deemed complete!
I do not experience fatigue, hunger or pain! I will battle you all until--
--you gliiEEEEEEEEeeeeeeeeet
BAKOOM!
Unregistered mutants located.
Unknown robot destroyed.
Destroy-Capture mode activated.
Oh, great, like things don't suck enough.
HEY, RUBE!
We got problems!


BOOOOM!
Two non-mutant Su-Humanoid females.
Destroy-Capture mode implemented.
Any idea what we should do?!!
I'm gonna run like hell for about four hours and then maybe beg for mercy!
t's not much of a plan, I admit, but I'm having trouble concentrating with the giant robots trying to kill us!
BOOM!
Keep moving! There's too many! We've got to try and outrun them!!
BOOM!
BOOM!
Sure! Where's all your Goddess talk now when we need it!?


Human Sympathizer. Cybernetic armor.
Magnetic pulse deployed.
Deactivated.
CRANK!
These guys seem *a lot* bigger and nastier than the other ones!
You want those to be your *last words?*
I think they were *Custer's...*
BLINK
BLINK
Rabbit hunt.
Immediate Evac.
BLINK!
BLINK!
BLINK!


It took Blink nearly three hours to get the entire group several hundred miles away.
And Weapon X had very little fight left in them.
Listen, could you please just push my reboot button? It's under my left armpit.
Nope.
Please?
Be quiet or I'll let the kids spit in your eye-slots again.
No...
Darlin', it wasn't like we were gonna be able to stay together. I'm on the opposite side of the coin.
It's better this way. It works. It repairs the timeline and everyone moves forward-- the Tallus agrees.
I stay here. I raise David and all these children. Build us an army. Save this world.
David Richards won't become a monster with me looking after him. I think I'm up to the job...
You're... you're a wonderful father.


Clarice...
I've always thought that when this all *ends*... when we fixed all we're supposed to fix... that... that we'd be *together*...
We *still* may be, Clarice...
Not with you *here*... the Tallus says this will create a *new reality* for you...
..I may never see you again..
I *will* find you Clarice. I will.
We found each other this time. We will again.
There are *other* worlds than this.
END

REALITY CHECK

Dear Reality Check,

Fist of all, I want to congratulate you all for one wonderful book. The writing is superb, and the art is exceptional. This comic book is doing what all the X-books should, making us feel emotions and giving us good action as an extra. Now, request time: Give us Psylocke!

If not as a central character, at least let us see her in some of the worlds visited by the Exiles. I really miss her and I doubt she's ever coming back to Marvel Universe continuity anytime soon!

Pretty please?

Norbert Schwartz
(via e-mail)

Thanks for the compliments, Norbert! We don't think that Judd has any plans on Psylocke popping by right now, but in this book, from month to month, you never know!

Dear Judd, Mikes and crew

Eh? Nooooooo! It isn't true! No more T-Bird! Oh well! Sasquatch'll do fine, even if he doesn't have a random transformer body!

Many congratulations on the amazing stories, art and general talent that is bound within the EXILES book. I look forward to seeing the AOA Sabretooth play his part soon. (How lucky am I? I like the dark anti-hero he's become in the other X-books recently) The standout panel for me was the 'pseudo family portrait' of Cyclops, Havoc and Mimic. Little touches like that one speak volumes about the characters involved. I like the idea of a constantly evolving line-up, but I suspect that it won't turn into the tongue-in-cheek book that X-Force has become. The characterization, sideward glances and unwritten despair, as well as the lack of wasting the first issue of each arc explaining who they are to people (all very Quantum Leap) have all forged together to make a strong foundation for the future. Whichever one it may be!

Until Mimic copies Leech and Exodus (oh, the confusion!) Make Mine Marvel!

Richard McKerron
Derby, England

We're all going to miss T-Bird, Richard. The big guy definitely grew on all of us. As for Sasquatch, it looks like he's a she! Oh man, this alternate reality stuff is screwy!

Hey EXILES-types,

I just finished EXILES #10 and I must say I am absolutely astounded. This issue was nothing short of perfect. The final page was the most moving and emotional I have seen in a comic. In one single page you managed to pull emotions out of me I never thought a comic book could. This issue brought fear, devastation, shock and loss, but also hope and an exponentially deeper feeling of connection to this team. They have all experienced so much in a short span of issues. This is by far the best-written comic on the shelves today, and is the best written, most completely developed work I've read since DC's *Watchmen*.

Marvel has grown up a lot in the past year, and EXILES is the perfect centerpiece for the future of comics.

ShaneXtopher
(via e-mail)

Here in the office we felt EXILES #10 was one of the most emotional issues we've ever been involved with and it was really cool to be a part of it, ShaneXtopher. We've received a ton of e-mail about the loss of T-Bird and it looks as if everyone felt the story was a classic! We appreciate all the praise and we hope we live up to your expectations in our future story lines. Judd and Mike definitely outdid themselves and we, just like all you readers out there, can't wait to see what comes our way next! And to compare a young title like EXILES to *Watchmen*? We just hope we can continue to live up to all this hype!

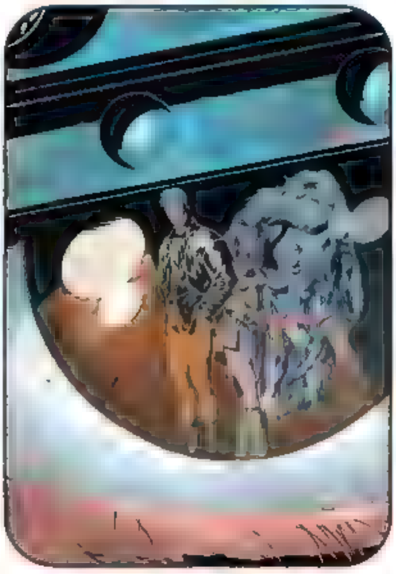
Next issue, we'll find out how far the EXILES will go to move to their next reality and if it's worth the life of a young child! Expect the unexpected, as always, from this book and let your friends know what a cool read EXILES truly is!

MIKE RAICHT
ASSISTANT EDITOR

MIKE MARTS
EDITOR

JOE QUESADA
CHIEF

MIKE & MIKE



NEXT ISSUE:

PEER INTO THE EYE OF DOOM. THE GOOD DOCTOR AND THE EXILES IN 30!

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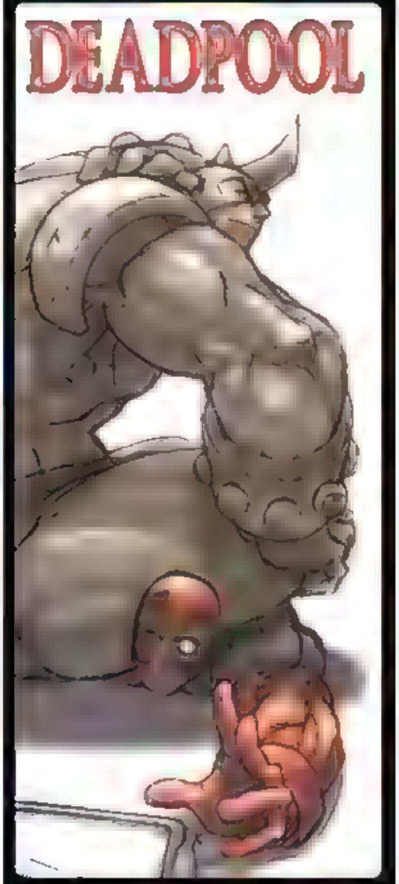
You think *you're* having a bad day?

Meet Deadpool.

And his large friend.

Make yourself feel better.



WRITER GAIL SIMONE AND UDON STUDIOS GUIDE YOU THROUGH ONE MAN'S JOURNEY TO FIND A BETTER LIFE.

MARVEL

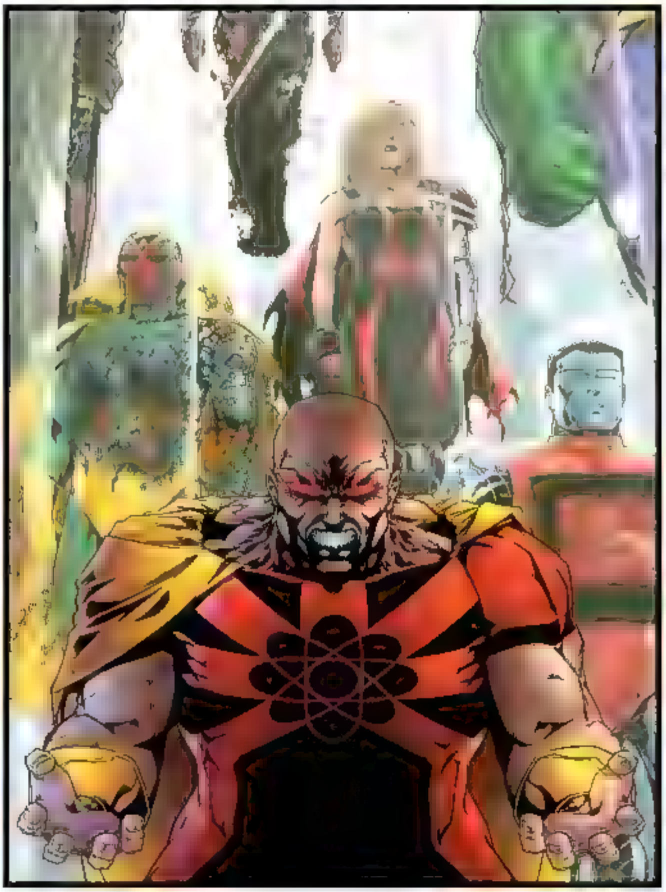
MARVEL
66
BEDARD
CALAFIORE
McKENNA
EXILES

There exist parallel universes, alternate realities. Some are like the world we know, others completely different. A few tragic realities are damaged, twisted and downright ***dangerous***. That's where you'll find the EXILES, a team of mutants who repair the broken links in the chains of Time, restoring the cosmic balance

EXILES

PREVIOUSLY

Plucked from their own separate realities, BLINK, SABRETOOTH, MIMIC, MORPH, SASQUATCH, NAMORA and BEAK were instructed to travel from one flawed version of Earth to the next, saving each world from its own disastrous flaws. Only if they carried out these impossible missions would the mysterious TIMEBROKER allow them to return to their former lives. Unfortunately, that was all a **lie**



The Exiles traveled to the Timebroker's own seat of power, an extra-dimensional observatory carved entirely from energized crystal. Once there, they found no Timebroker at all. Instead, the "Crystal Palace" was operated by a group of alien scientists who hid their own existence behind the Timebroker facade. It was these aliens, dubbed the TIMEBREAKERS, who had originally damaged the realities that the Exiles have been repairing. And the news got even worse: HYPERION, the evil superhuman who nearly killed the Exiles once before, had assumed control of the Crystal Palace and now threatened the whole Multiverse The Exiles made a valiant stand against Hyperion, but his power was too great for them to match Morph and Mimic were grievously injured and brave Namora, Queen of Atlantis, paid the ultimate price It all came down to the weakest Exile, Beak, who recruited the help of two good Hyperions to save the Multiverse Now, in the aftermath of that titanic struggle, our heroes must contend with the shocking secrets they uncovered, and each of them must decide how to proceed now that they no longer answer to the Timebroker...

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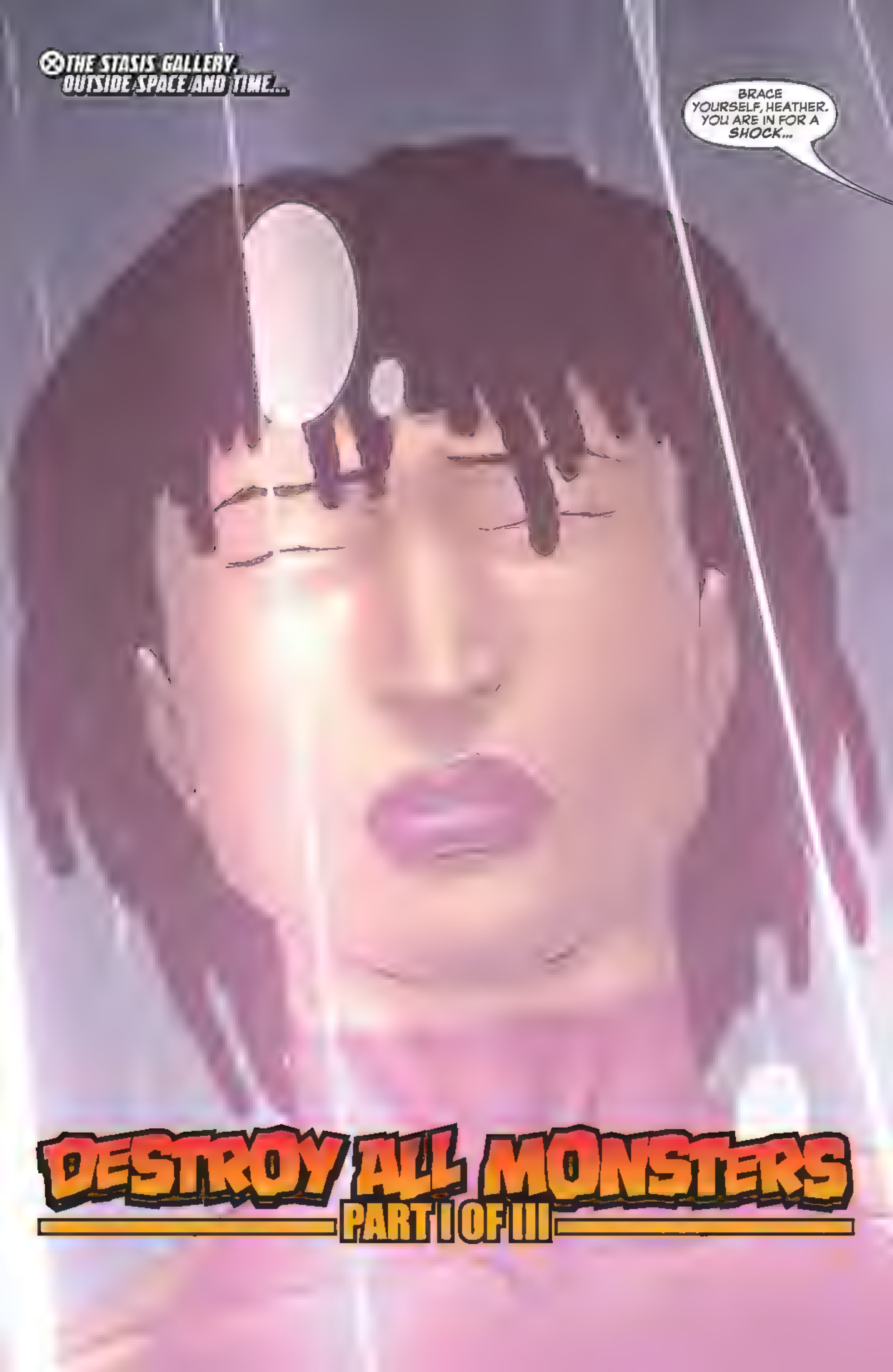
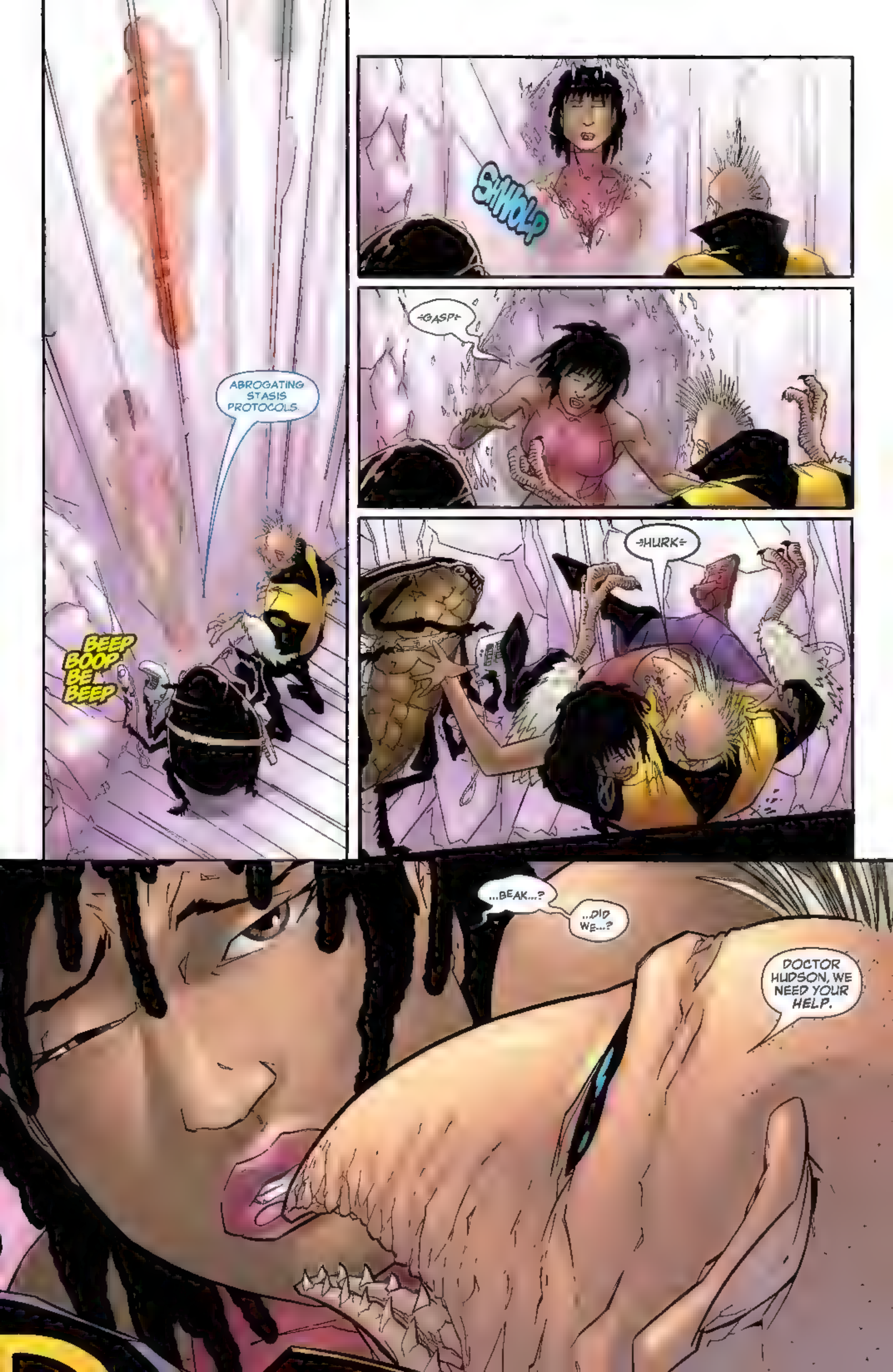
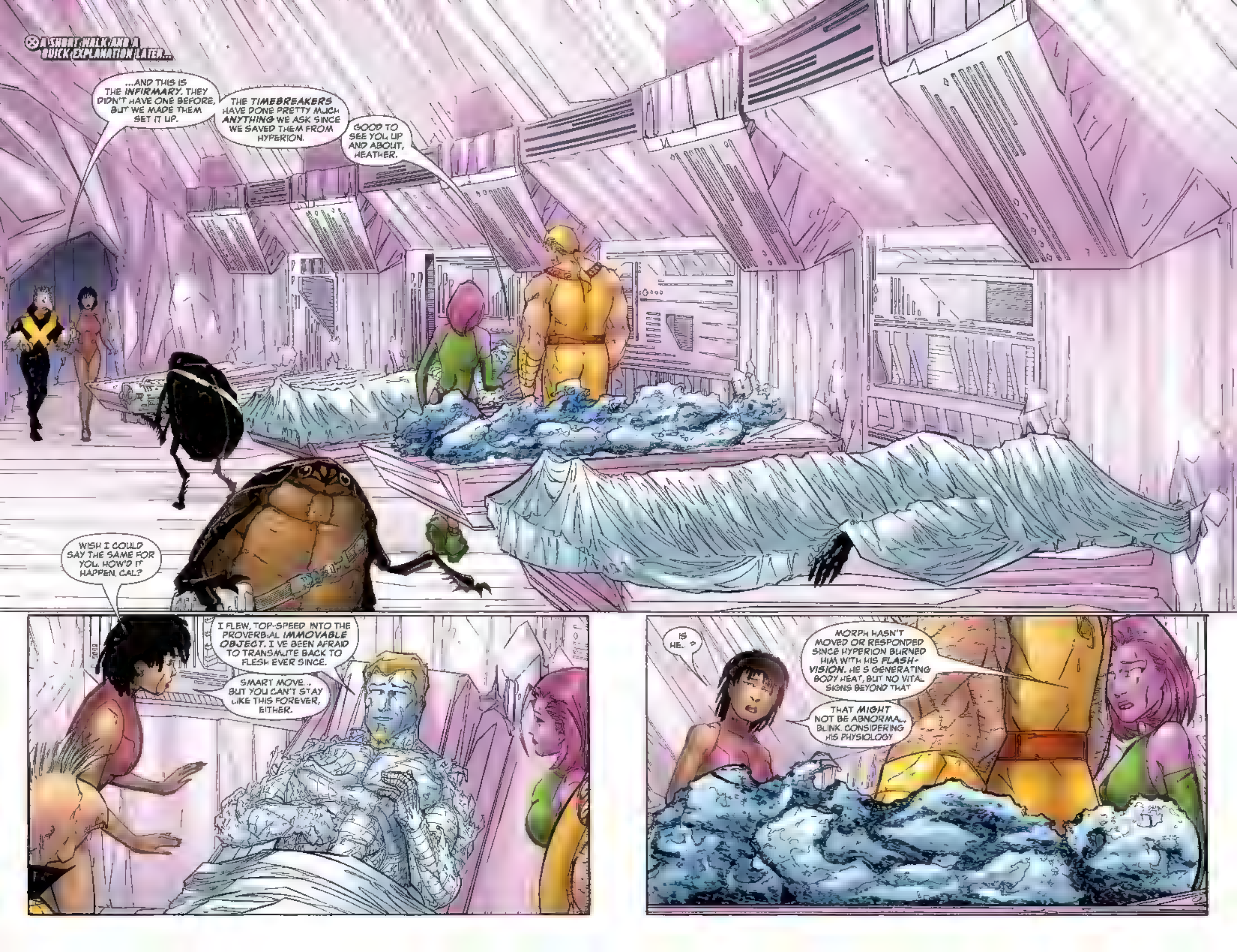
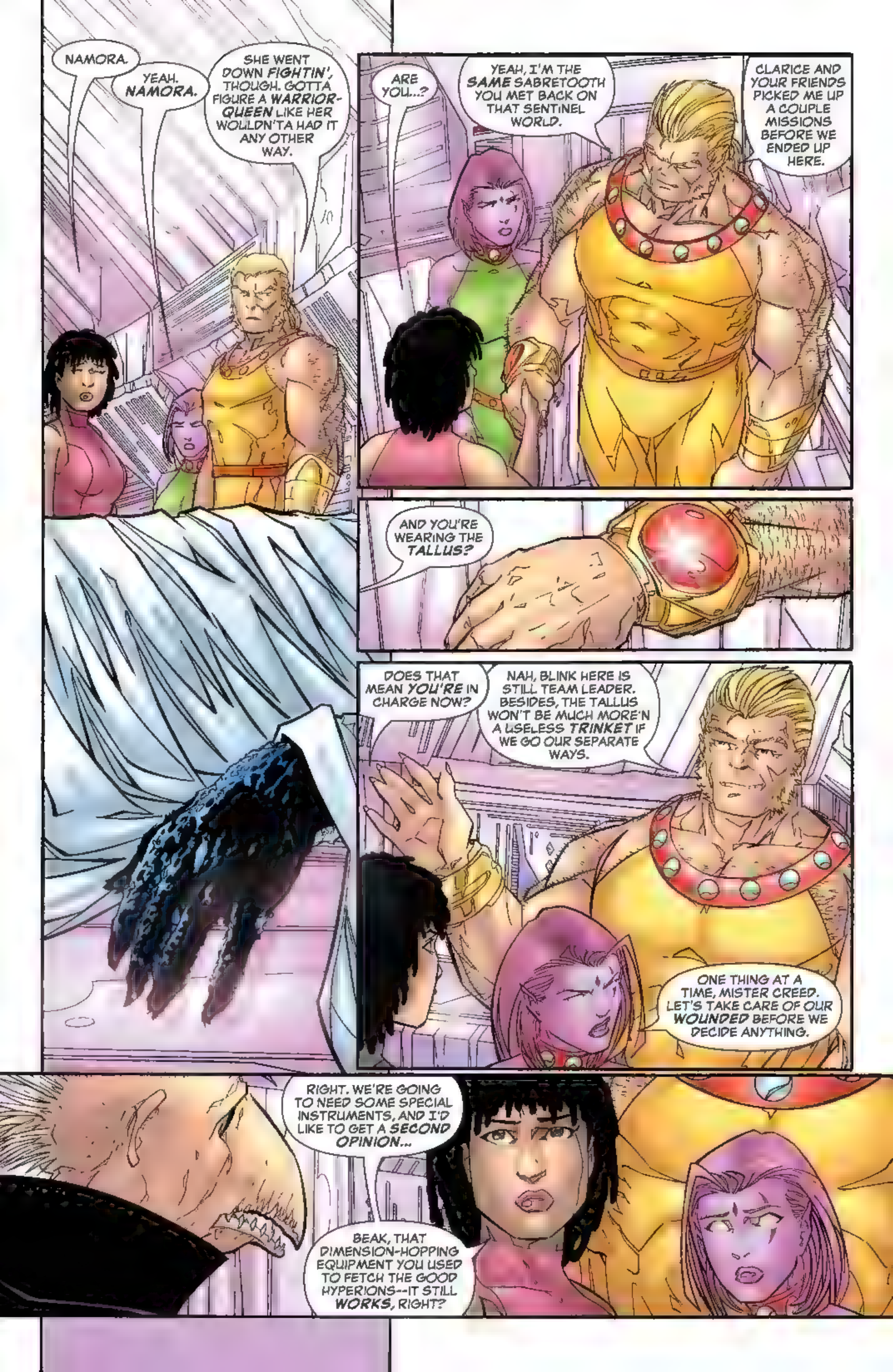
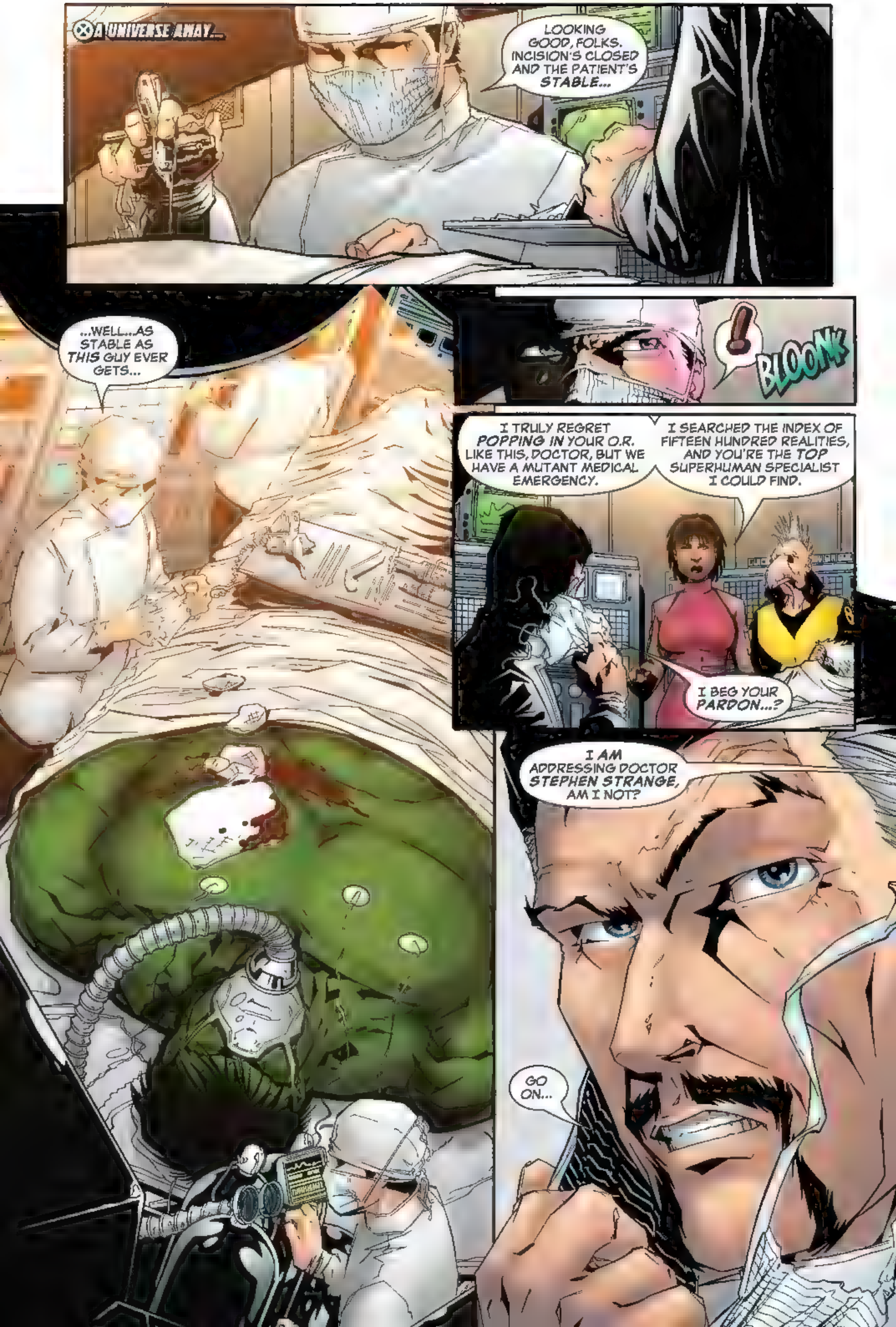
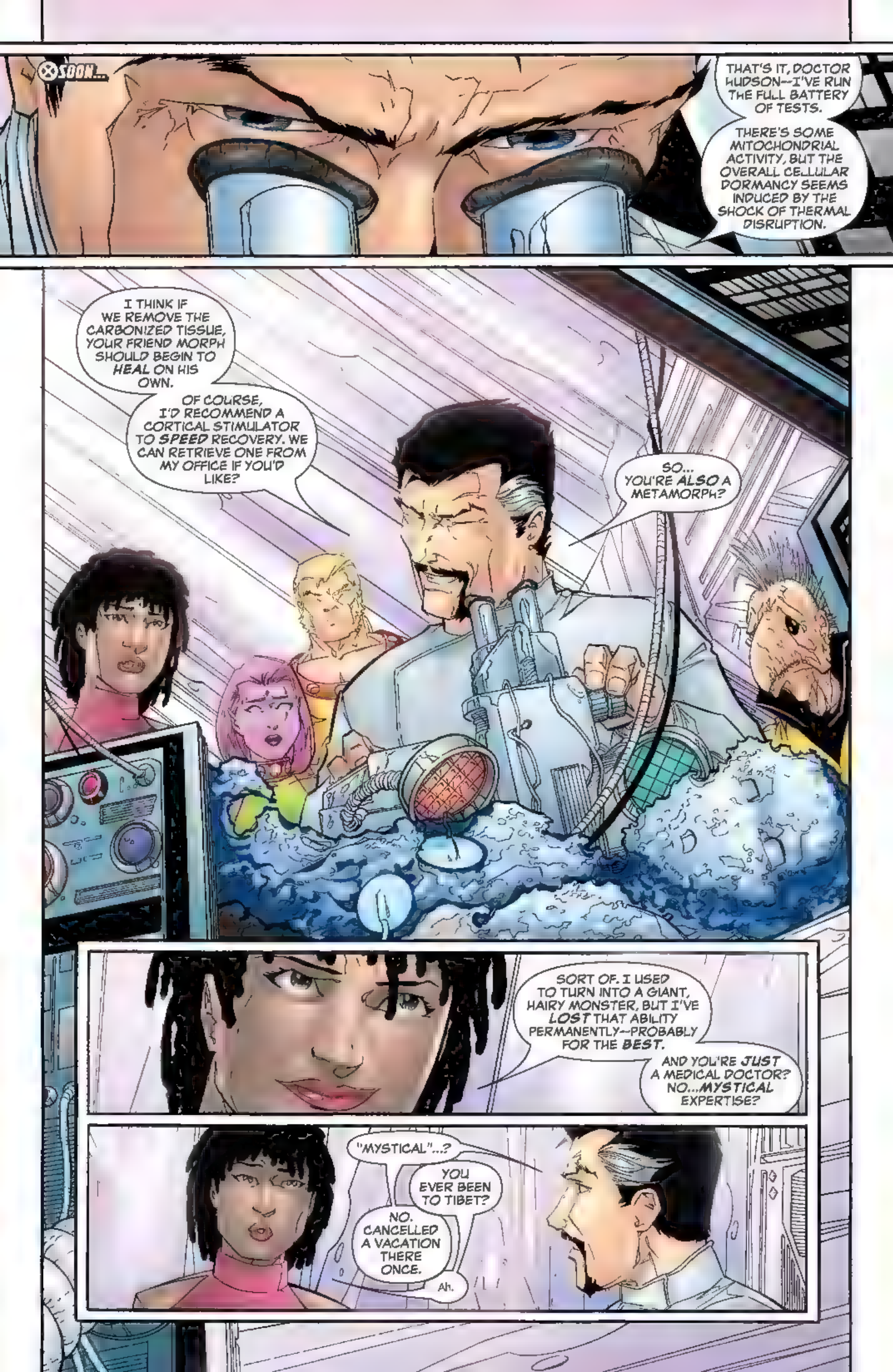

THE STASIS GALLERY, OUTSIDE SPACE AND TIME...
BRACE YOURSELF, HEATHER. YOU ARE IN FOR A SHOCK...
DESTROY ALL MONSTERS
PART I OF III

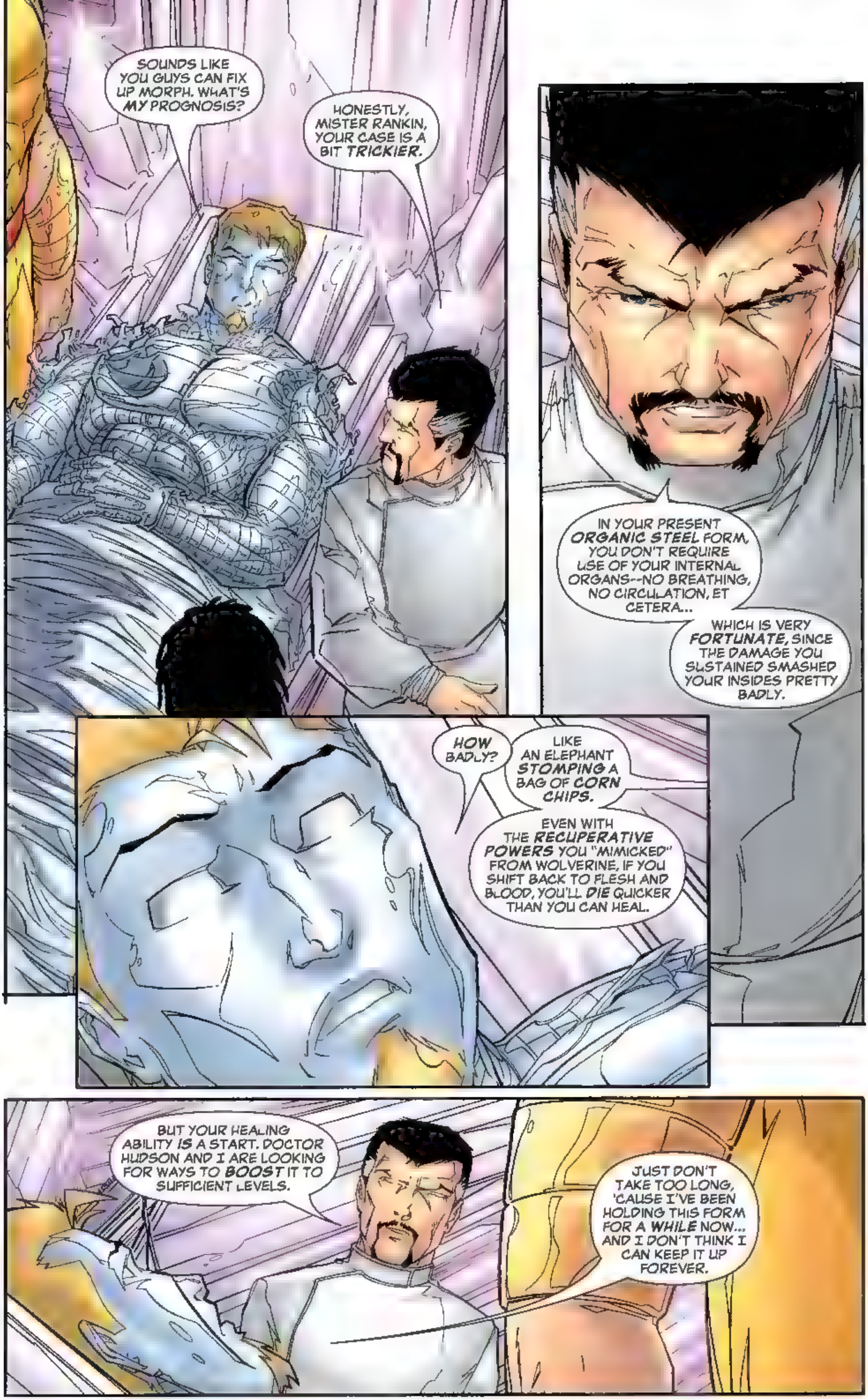

ABROGATING STASIS PROTOCOLS.
BEEP BOOP BE BEEP
SHWOLP
=GASP=
=HURK=
...BEAK...?
...DID WE...?
DOCTOR HUDSON, WE NEED YOUR HELP.

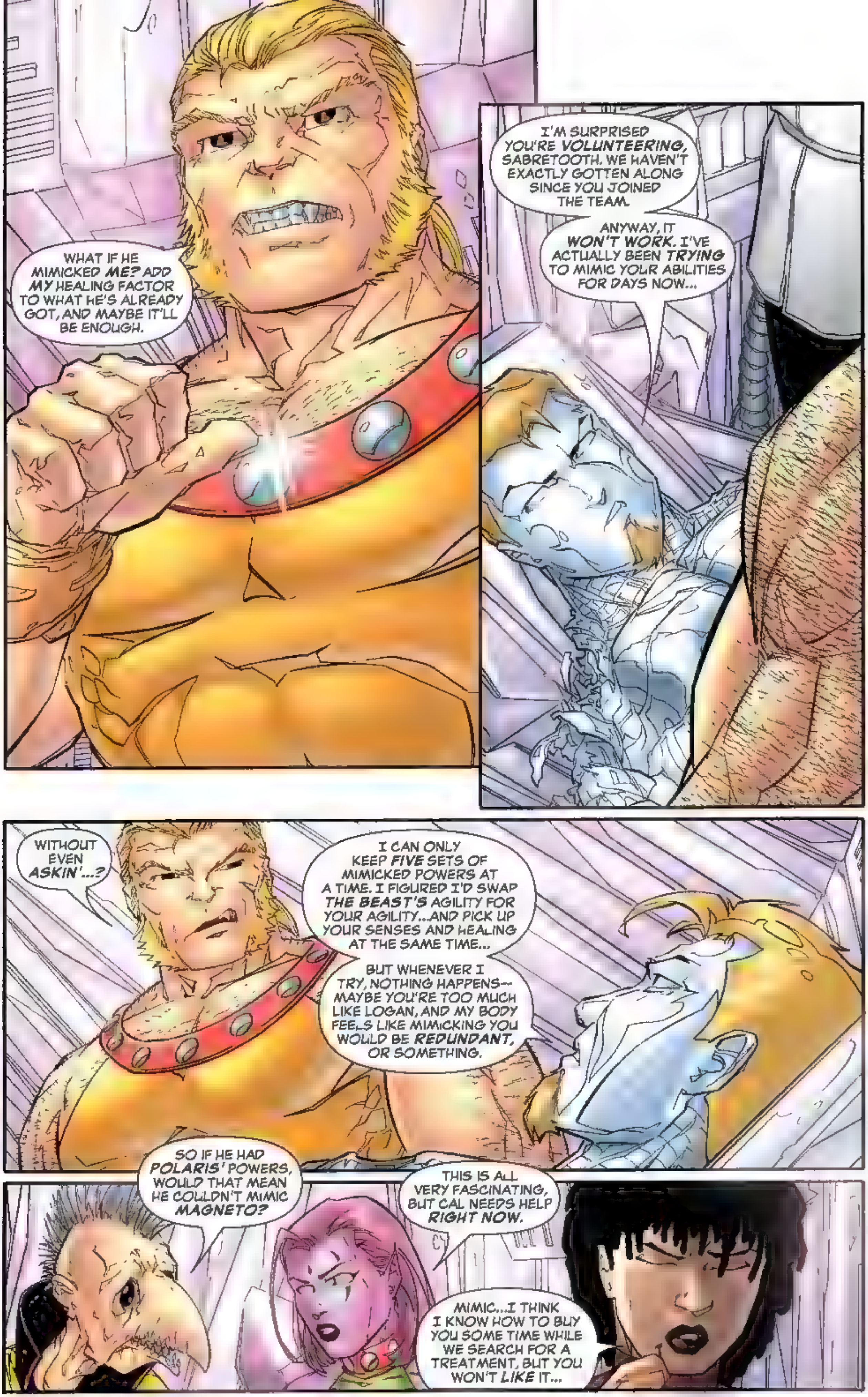

A SHORT WALK AND A QUICK EXPLANATION LATER...
...AND THIS IS THE INFIRMARY. THEY DIDN'T HAVE ONE BEFORE, BUT WE MADE THEM SET IT UP.
THE TIMEBREAKERS HAVE DONE PRETTY MUCH ANYTHING WE ASK SINCE WE SAVED THEM FROM HYPERION.
GOOD TO SEE YOU UP AND ABOUT, HEATHER.
WISH I COULD SAY THE SAME FOR YOU. HOW'D IT HAPPEN, CAL?
I FLEW, TOP-SPEED INTO THE PROVERBIAL IMMOVABLE OBJECT. I'VE BEEN AFRAID TO TRANSMUTE BACK TO FLESH EVER SINCE.
SMART MOVE... BUT YOU CAN'T STAY LIKE THIS FOREVER, EITHER.
IS HE...?
MORPH HASN'T MOVED OR RESPONDED SINCE HYPERION BURNED HIM WITH HIS FLASH-VISION. HE'S GENERATING BODY HEAT, BUT NO VITAL SIGNS BEYOND THAT.
THAT MIGHT NOT BE ABNORMAL, BLINK. CONSIDERING HIS PHYSIOLOGY.

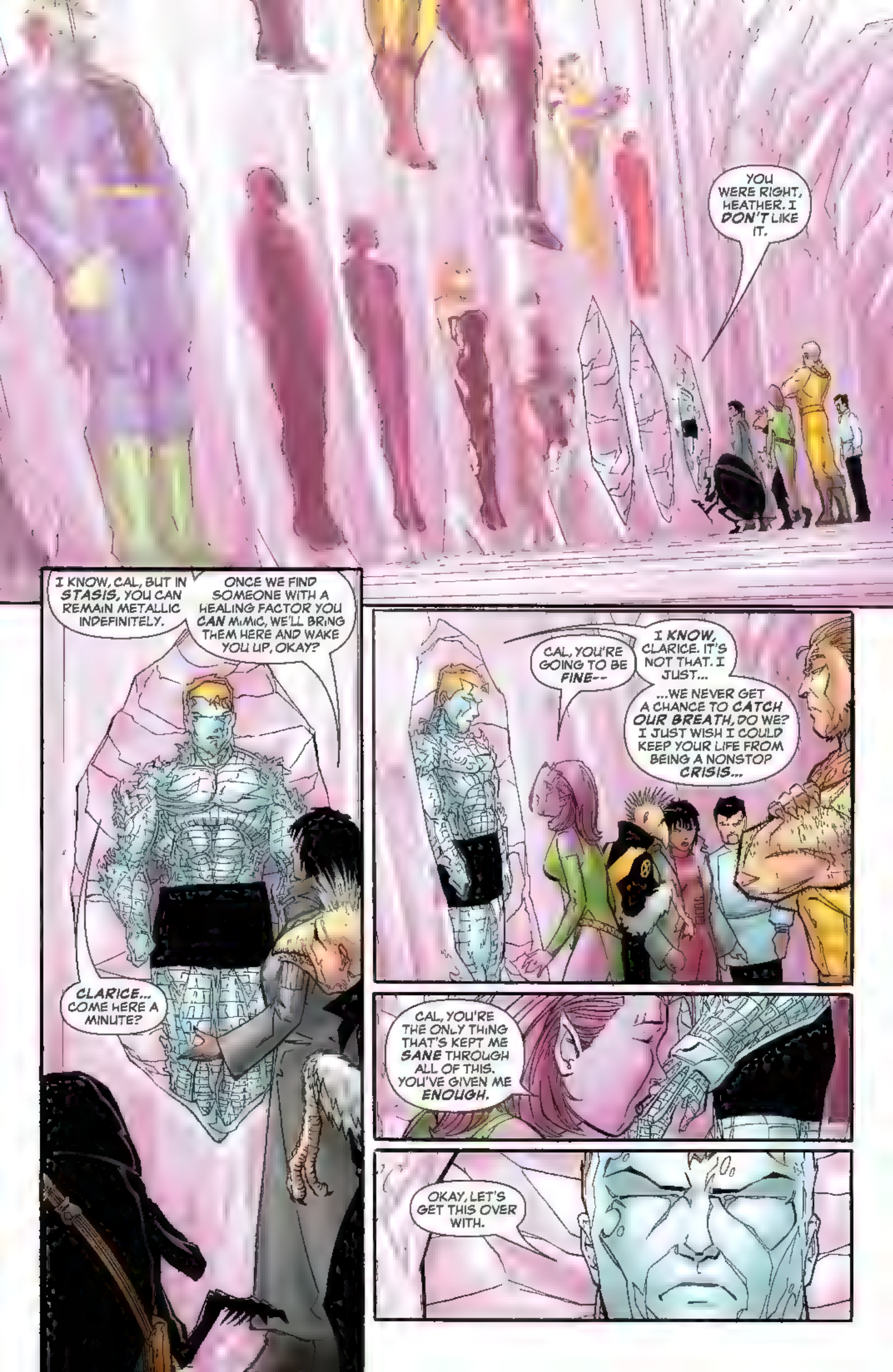

NAMORA.
YEAH. NAMORA.
SHE WENT DOWN FIGHTIN', THOUGH. GOTTA FIGURE A WARRIOR-QUEEN LIKE HER WOULDN'TA HAD IT ANY OTHER WAY.
ARE YOU...?
YEAH, I'M THE SAME SABRETOOTH YOU MET BACK ON THAT SENTINEL WORLD.
CLARICE AND YOUR FRIENDS PICKED ME UP A COUPLE MISSIONS BEFORE WE ENDED UP HERE.
AND YOU'RE WEARING THE TALLUS?
DOES THAT MEAN YOU'RE IN CHARGE NOW?
NAH, BLINK HERE IS STILL TEAM LEADER. BESIDES, THE TALLUS WON'T BE MUCH MORE'N A USELESS TRINKET IF WE GO OUR SEPARATE WAYS.
ONE THING AT A TIME, MISTER CREED. LET'S TAKE CARE OF OUR WOUNDED BEFORE WE DECIDE ANYTHING.
RIGHT. WE'RE GOING TO NEED SOME SPECIAL INSTRUMENTS, AND I'D LIKE TO GET A SECOND OPINION...
BEAK, THAT DIMENSION-HOPPING EQUIPMENT YOU USED TO FETCH THE GOOD HYPERIONS--IT STILL WORKS, RIGHT?

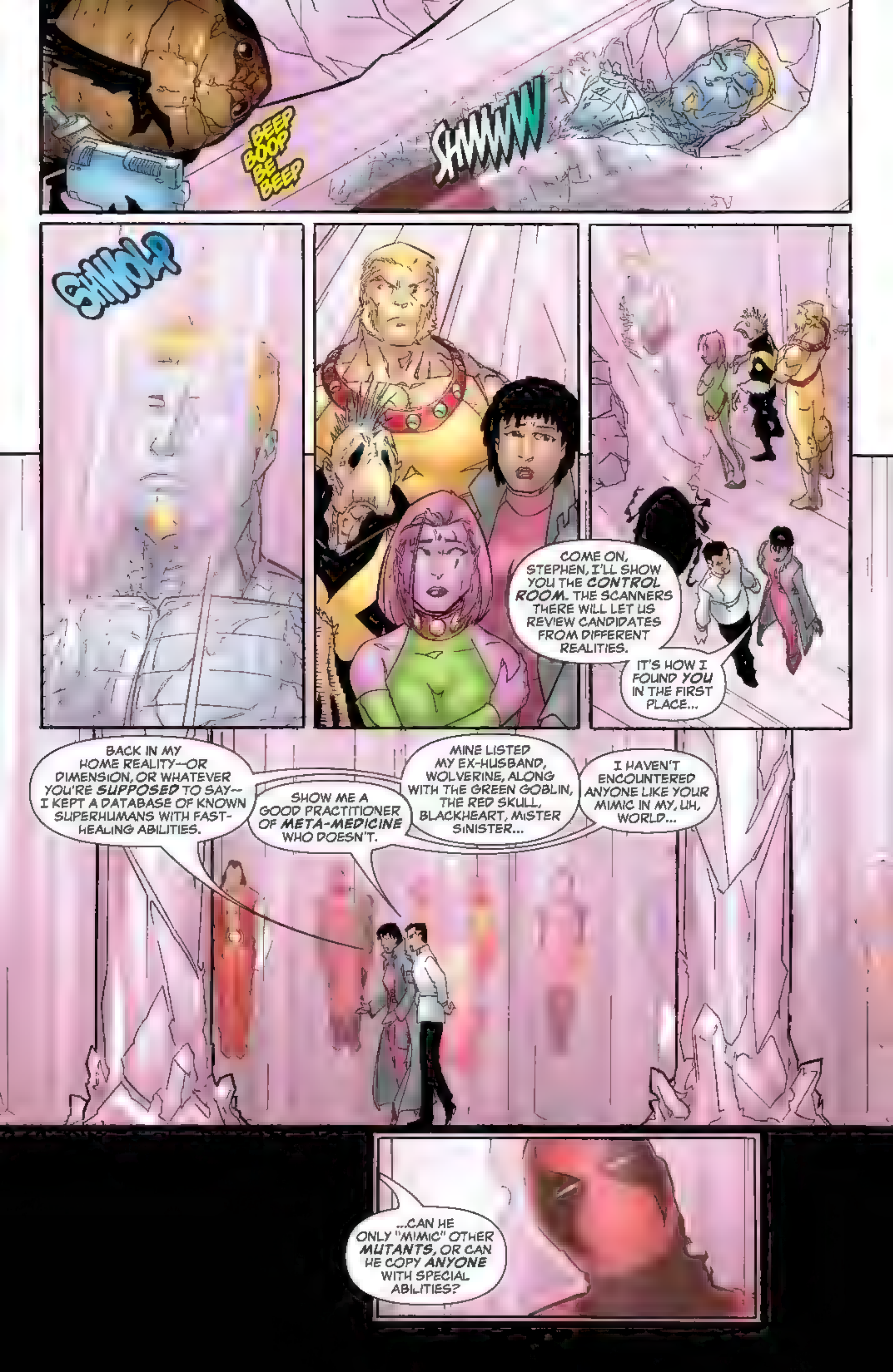

A UNIVERSE AWAY...
LOOKING GOOD, FOLKS. INCISION'S CLOSED AND THE PATIENT'S STABLE...
...WELL...AS STABLE AS THIS GUY EVER GETS...
!
BLOONK
I TRULY REGRET POPPING IN YOUR O.R. LIKE THIS, DOCTOR, BUT WE HAVE A MUTANT MEDICAL EMERGENCY.
I SEARCHED THE INDEX OF FIFTEEN HUNDRED REALITIES, AND YOU'RE THE TOP SUPERHUMAN SPECIALIST I COULD FIND.
I BEG YOUR PARDON...?
I AM ADDRESSING DOCTOR STEPHEN STRANGE, AM I NOT?
GO ON...

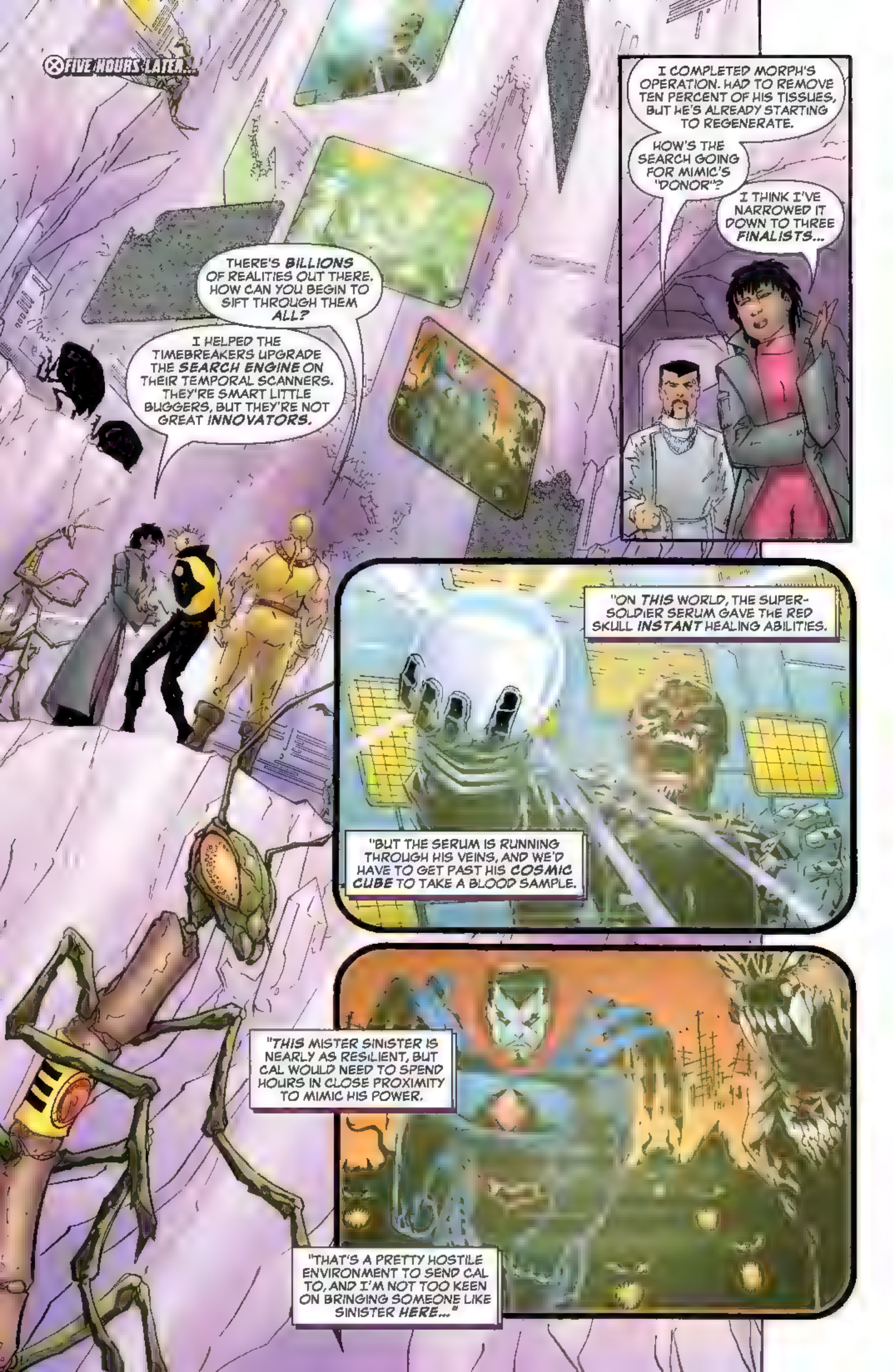

SOON...
THAT'S IT, DOCTOR HUDSON--I'VE RUN THE FULL BATTERY OF TESTS.
THERE'S SOME MITOCHONDRIAL ACTIVITY, BUT THE OVERALL CELLULAR DORMANCY SEEMS INDUCED BY THE SHOCK OF THERMAL DISRUPTION.
I THINK IF WE REMOVE THE CARBONIZED TISSUE, YOUR FRIEND MORPH SHOULD BEGIN TO HEAL ON HIS OWN.
OF COURSE, I'D RECOMMEND A CORTICAL STIMULATOR TO SPEED RECOVERY. WE CAN RETRIEVE ONE FROM MY OFFICE IF YOU'D LIKE?
SO... YOU'RE ALSO A METAMORPH?
SORT OF. I USED TO TURN INTO A GIANT, HAIRY MONSTER, BUT I'VE LOST THAT ABILITY PERMANENTLY--PROBABLY FOR THE BEST.
AND YOU'RE JUST A MEDICAL DOCTOR? NO...MYSTICAL EXPERTISE?
"MYSTICAL"...?
YOU EVER BEEN TO TIBET?
NO. CANCELLED A VACATION THERE ONCE.
Ah.

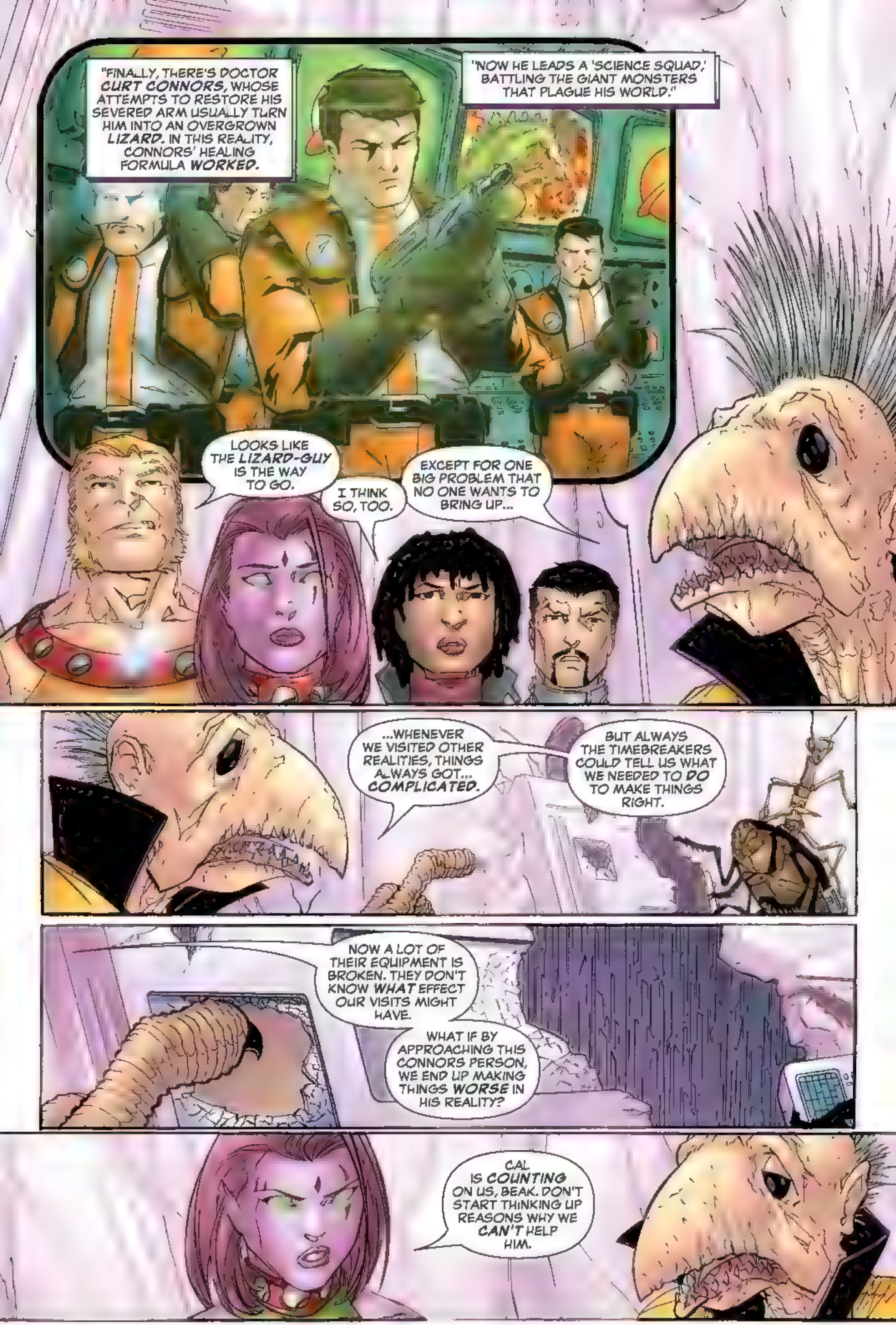

SOUNDS LIKE YOU GUYS CAN FIX UP MORPH. WHAT'S *MY* PROGNOSIS?
HONESTLY, MISTER RANKIN, YOUR CASE IS A BIT *TRICKIER.*
IN YOUR PRESENT *ORGANIC STEEL* FORM, YOU DON'T REQUIRE USE OF YOUR INTERNAL ORGANS--NO BREATHING, NO CIRCULATION, ET CETERA...
WHICH IS VERY *FORTUNATE,* SINCE THE DAMAGE YOU SUSTAINED SMASHED YOUR INSIDES PRETTY BADLY.
HOW BADLY?
LIKE AN ELEPHANT *STOMPING* A BAG OF *CORN CHIPS.*
EVEN WITH THE *RECUPERATIVE POWERS* YOU "MIMICKED" FROM WOLVERINE, IF YOU SHIFT BACK TO FLESH AND BLOOD, YOU'LL *DIE* QUICKER THAN YOU CAN HEAL.
BUT YOUR HEALING ABILITY *IS* A START. DOCTOR HUDSON AND I ARE LOOKING FOR WAYS TO *BOOST* IT TO SUFFICIENT LEVELS.
JUST DON'T TAKE TOO LONG, 'CAUSE I'VE BEEN HOLDING THIS FORM FOR A *WHILE* NOW... AND I DON'T THINK I CAN KEEP IT UP FOREVER.

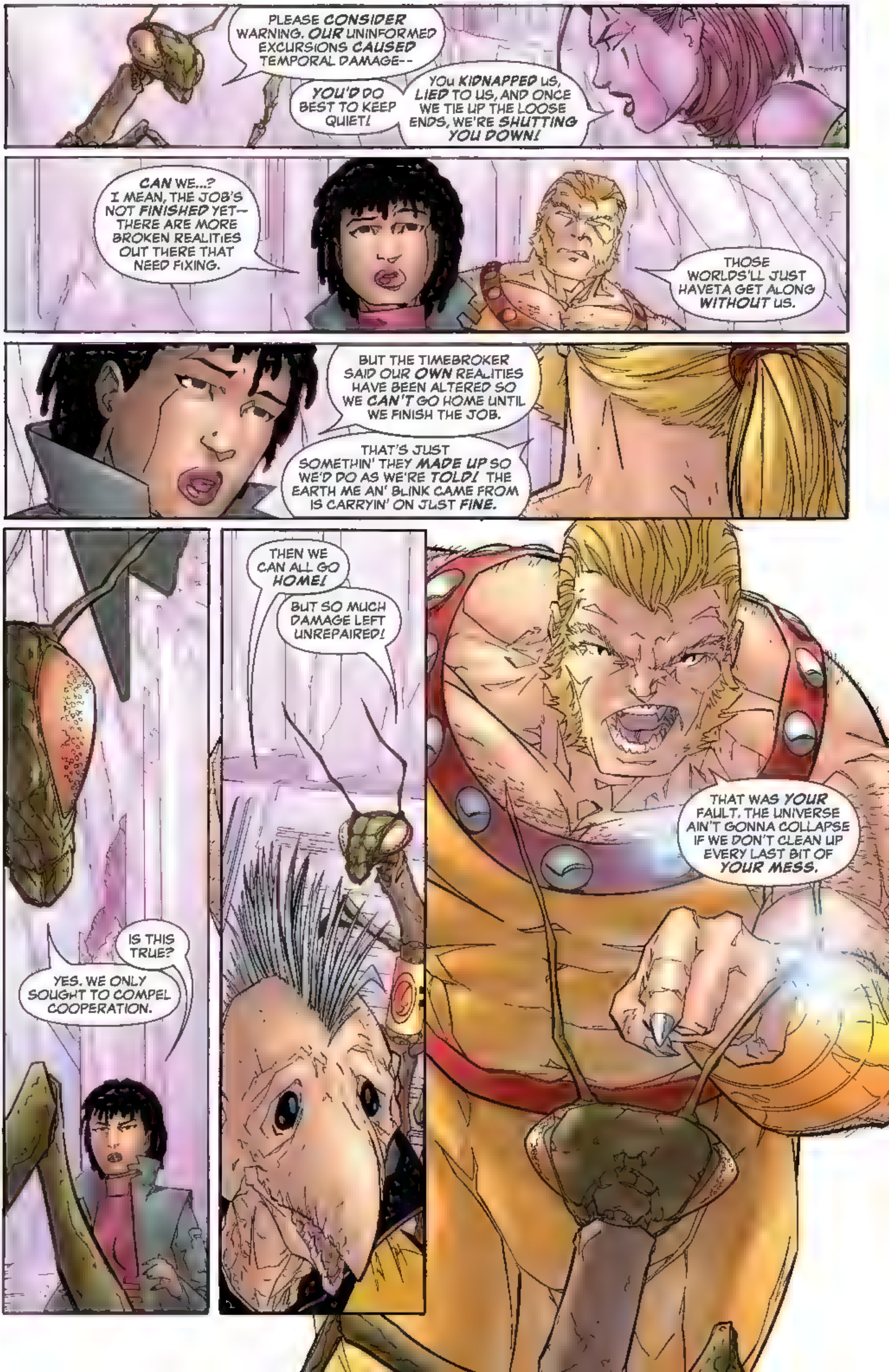

WHAT IF HE MIMICKED ME? ADD MY HEALING FACTOR TO WHAT HE'S ALREADY GOT, AND MAYBE IT'LL BE ENOUGH.
I'M SURPRISED YOU'RE VOLUNTEERING, SABRETOOTH. WE HAVEN'T EXACTLY GOTTEN ALONG SINCE YOU JOINED THE TEAM.
ANYWAY, IT WON'T WORK. I'VE ACTUALLY BEEN TRYING TO MIMIC YOUR ABILITIES FOR DAYS NOW...
WITHOUT EVEN ASKIN'...?
I CAN ONLY KEEP FIVE SETS OF MIMICKED POWERS AT A TIME. I FIGURED I'D SWAP THE BEAST'S AGILITY FOR YOUR AGILITY...AND PICK UP YOUR SENSES AND HEALING AT THE SAME TIME...
BUT WHENEVER I TRY, NOTHING HAPPENS--MAYBE YOU'RE TOO MUCH LIKE LOGAN, AND MY BODY FEELS LIKE MIMICKING YOU WOULD BE REDUNDANT, OR SOMETHING.
SO IF HE HAD POLARIS' POWERS, WOULD THAT MEAN HE COULDN'T MIMIC MAGNETO?
THIS IS ALL VERY FASCINATING, BUT CAL NEEDS HELP RIGHT NOW.
MIMIC...I THINK I KNOW HOW TO BUY YOU SOME TIME WHILE WE SEARCH FOR A TREATMENT, BUT YOU WON'T LIKE IT...

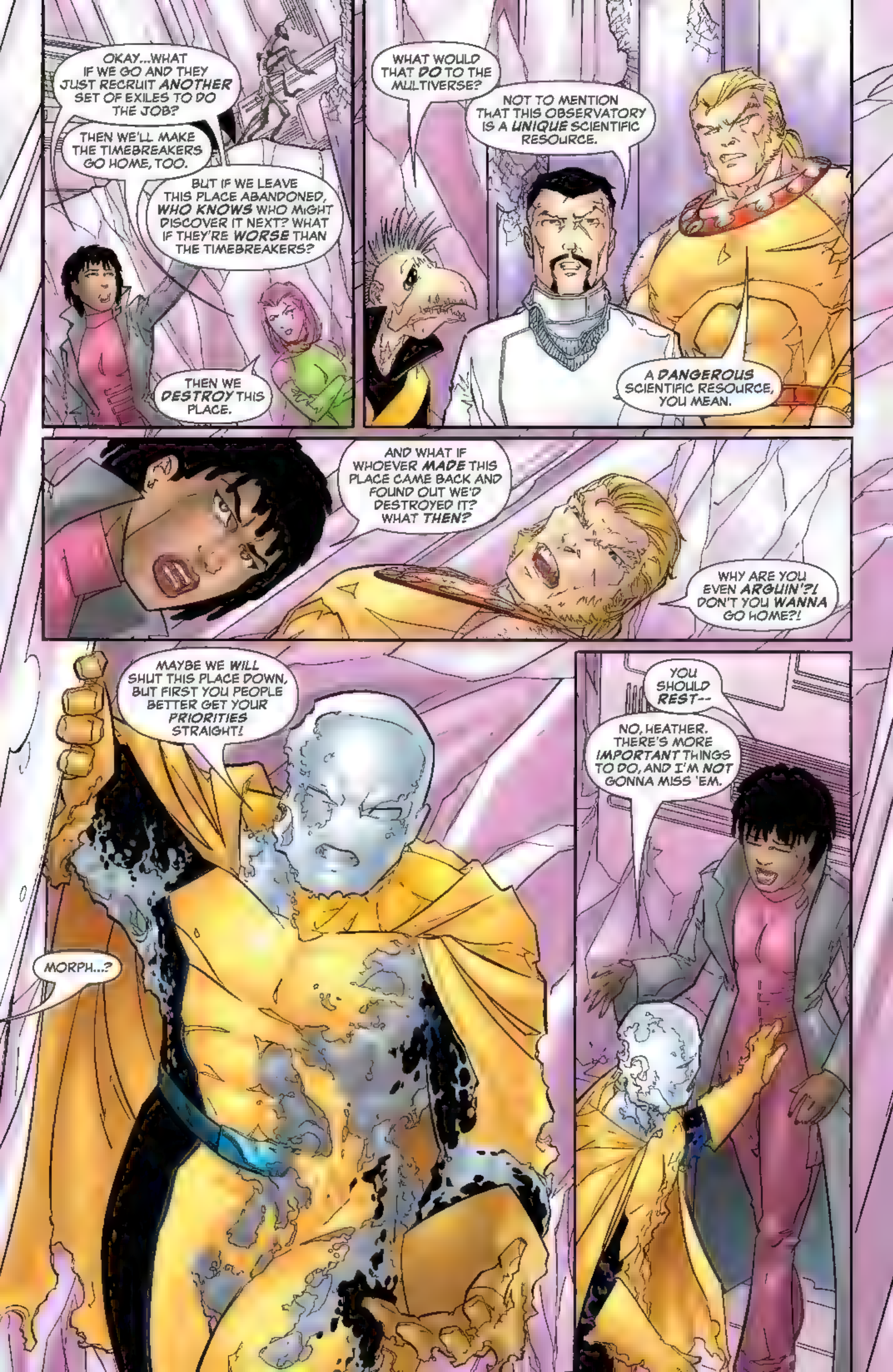

YOU WERE RIGHT, HEATHER. I *DON'T* LIKE IT.
I KNOW, CAL, BUT IN *STASIS*, YOU CAN REMAIN METALLIC INDEFINITELY.
ONCE WE FIND SOMEONE WITH A HEALING FACTOR YOU *CAN* MIMIC, WE'LL BRING THEM HERE AND WAKE YOU UP, OKAY?
CLARICE... COME HERE A MINUTE?
CAL, YOU'RE GOING TO BE *FINE--*
I KNOW, CLARICE. IT'S NOT THAT. I JUST...
...WE NEVER GET A CHANCE TO *CATCH OUR BREATH,* DO WE? I JUST WISH I COULD KEEP YOUR LIFE FROM BEING A NONSTOP *CRISIS...*
CAL, YOU'RE THE ONLY THING THAT'S KEPT ME *SANE* THROUGH ALL OF THIS. YOU'VE GIVEN ME *ENOUGH.*
OKAY, LET'S GET THIS OVER WITH.

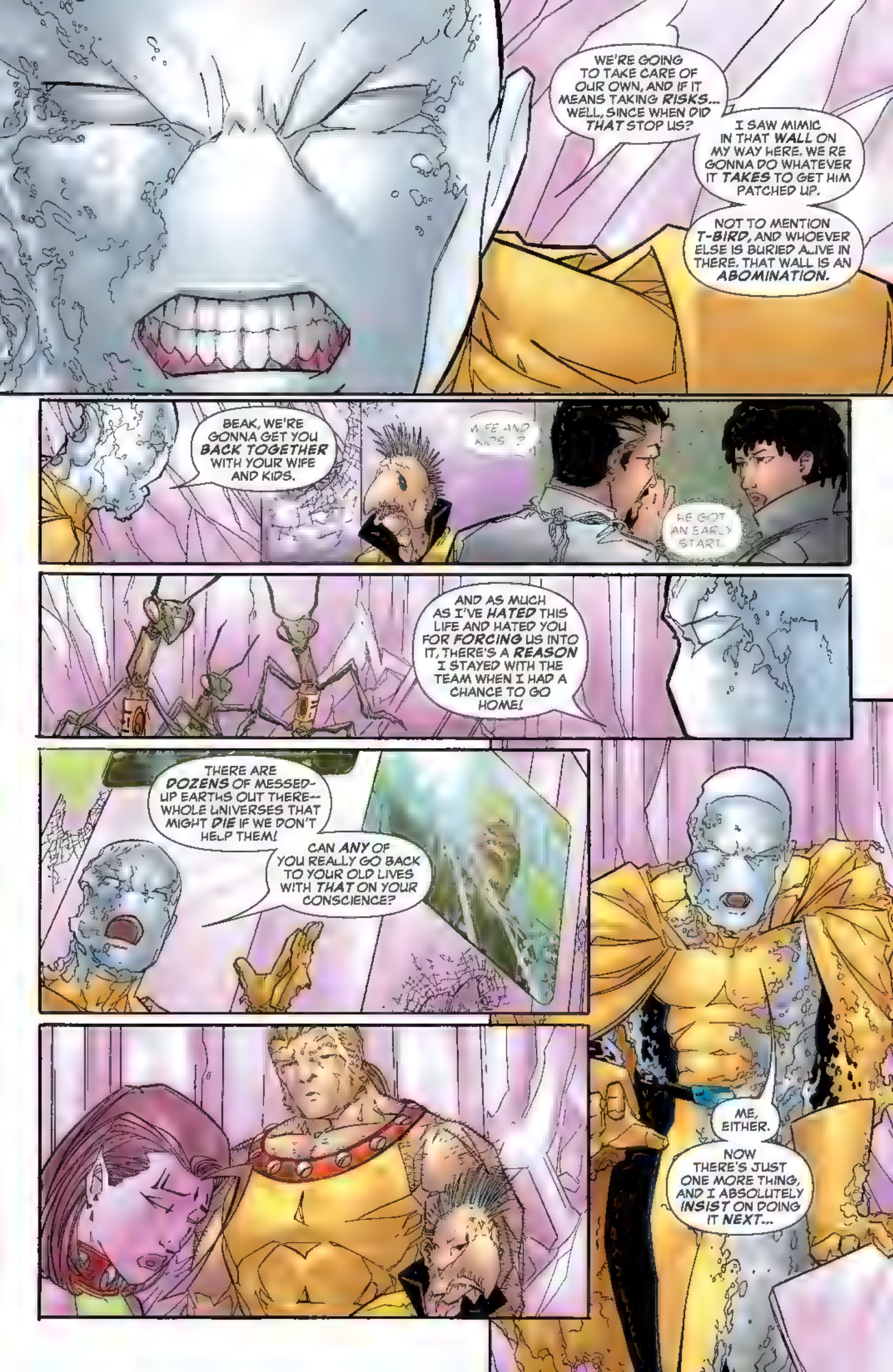

BEEP BOOP BE BEEP
SHWWWW
SHWOOP
COME ON, STEPHEN, I'LL SHOW YOU THE **CONTROL ROOM.** THE SCANNERS THERE WILL LET US REVIEW CANDIDATES FROM DIFFERENT REALITIES.
IT'S HOW I FOUND ***YOU*** IN THE FIRST PLACE...
BACK IN MY HOME REALITY--OR DIMENSION, OR WHATEVER YOU'RE ***SUPPOSED*** TO SAY--I KEPT A DATABASE OF KNOWN SUPERHUMANS WITH FAST-HEALING ABILITIES.
SHOW ME A GOOD PRACTITIONER OF ***META-MEDICINE*** WHO DOESN'T.
MINE LISTED MY EX-HUSBAND, WOLVERINE, ALONG WITH THE GREEN GOBLIN, THE RED SKULL, BLACKHEART, MISTER SINISTER...
I HAVEN'T ENCOUNTERED ANYONE LIKE YOUR MIMIC IN MY, UH, WORLD...
...CAN HE ONLY "MIMIC" OTHER ***MUTANTS,*** OR CAN HE COPY ***ANYONE*** WITH SPECIAL ABILITIES?

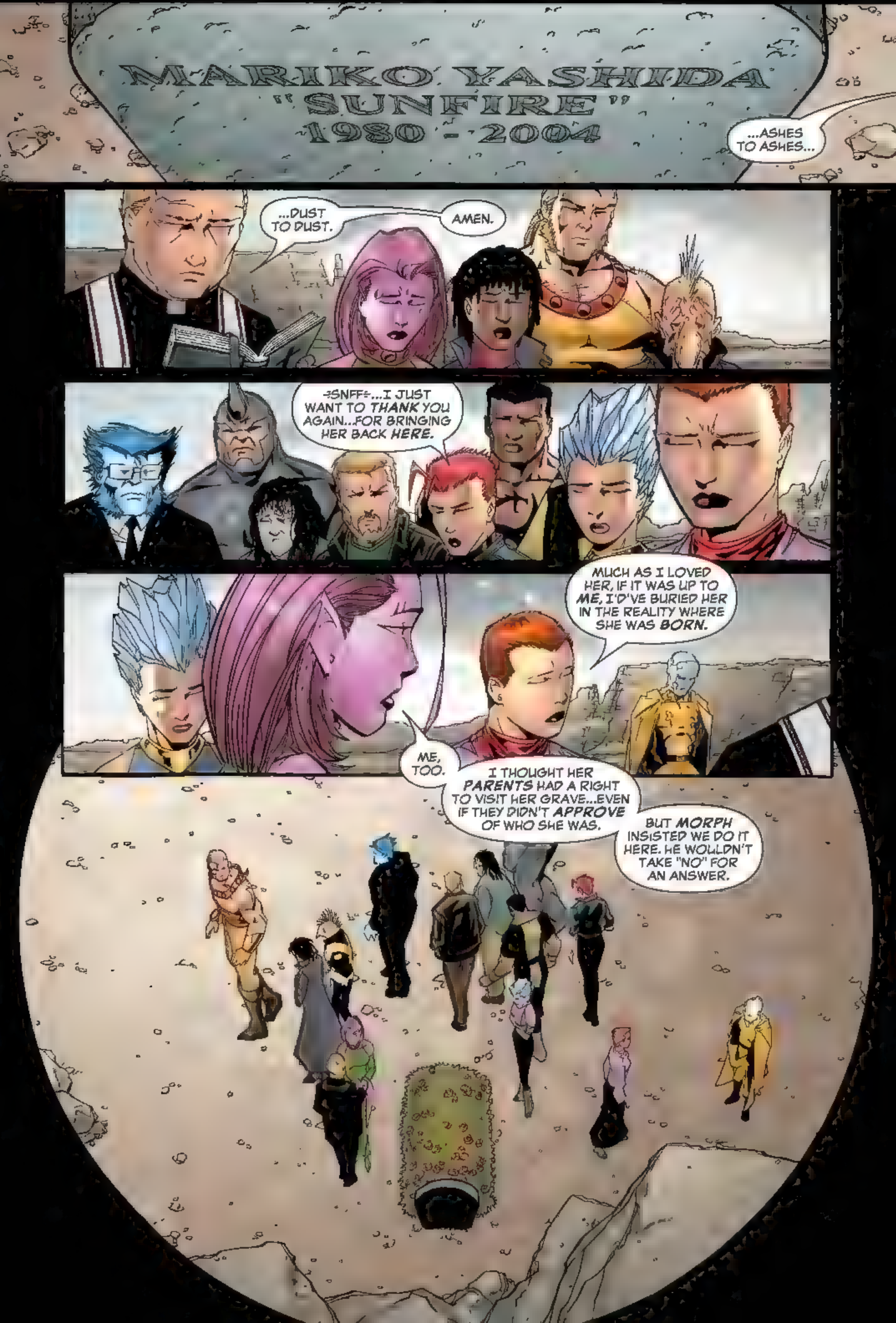

FIVE HOURS LATER...
I COMPLETED MORPH'S OPERATION. HAD TO REMOVE TEN PERCENT OF HIS TISSUES, BUT HE'S ALREADY STARTING TO REGENERATE.
HOW'S THE SEARCH GOING FOR MIMIC'S "DONOR"?
I THINK I'VE NARROWED IT DOWN TO THREE FINALISTS...
THERE'S BILLIONS OF REALITIES OUT THERE. HOW CAN YOU BEGIN TO SIFT THROUGH THEM ALL?
I HELPED THE TIMEBREAKERS UPGRADE THE SEARCH ENGINE ON THEIR TEMPORAL SCANNERS. THEY'RE SMART LITTLE BUGGERS, BUT THEY'RE NOT GREAT INNOVATORS.
"ON THIS WORLD, THE SUPER-SOLDIER SERUM GAVE THE RED SKULL INSTANT HEALING ABILITIES.
"BUT THE SERUM IS RUNNING THROUGH HIS VEINS, AND WE'D HAVE TO GET PAST HIS COSMIC CUBE TO TAKE A BLOOD SAMPLE.
"THIS MISTER SINISTER IS NEARLY AS RESILIENT, BUT CAL WOULD NEED TO SPEND HOURS IN CLOSE PROXIMITY TO MIMIC HIS POWER.
"THAT'S A PRETTY HOSTILE ENVIRONMENT TO SEND CAL TO, AND I'M NOT TOO KEEN ON BRINGING SOMEONE LIKE SINISTER HERE..."

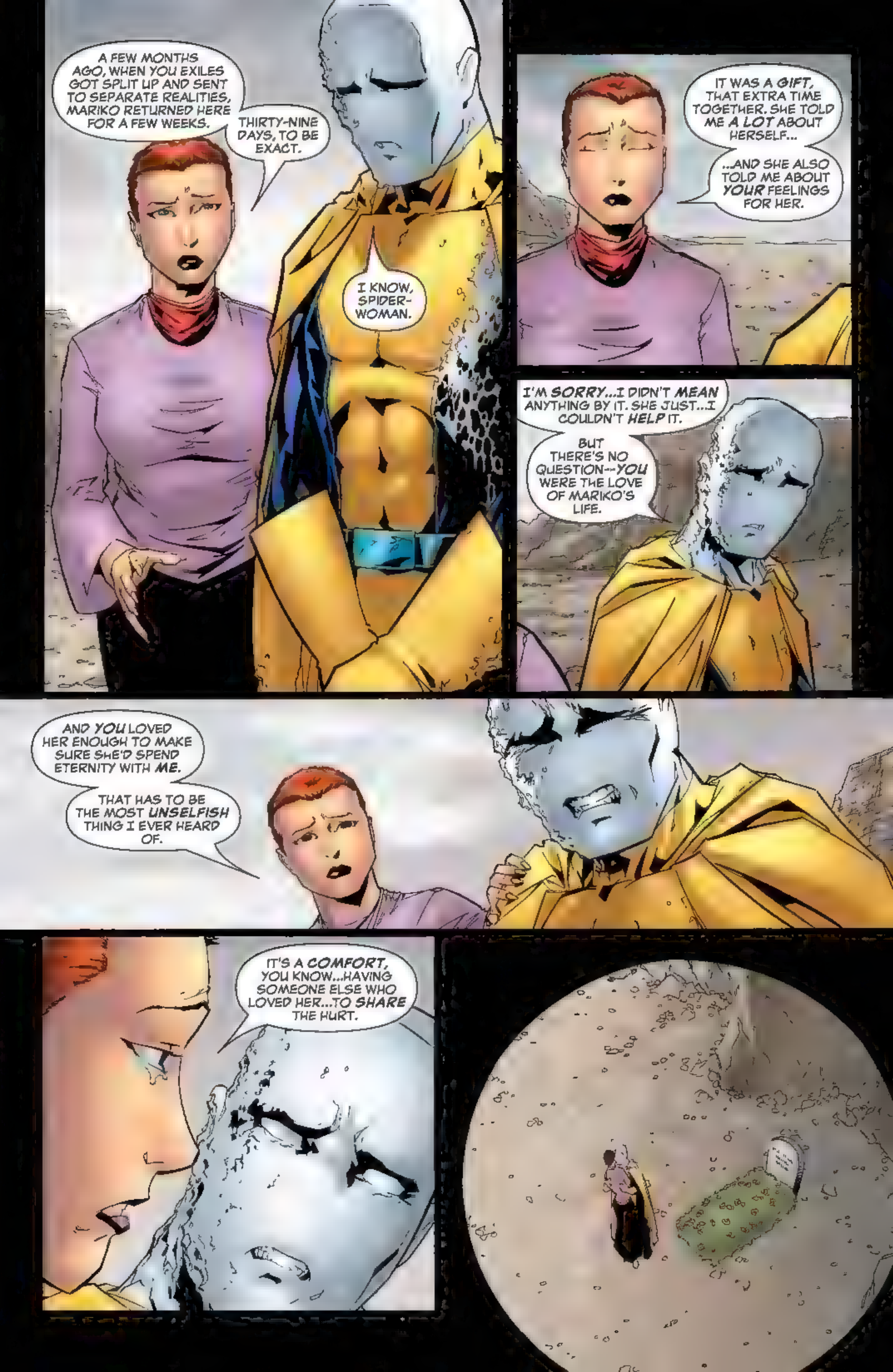

"FINALLY, THERE'S DOCTOR **CURT CONNORS**, WHOSE ATTEMPTS TO RESTORE HIS SEVERED ARM USUALLY TURN HIM INTO AN OVERGROWN **LIZARD**. IN THIS REALITY, CONNORS' HEALING FORMULA **WORKED**.
"NOW HE LEADS A 'SCIENCE SQUAD,' BATTLING THE GIANT MONSTERS THAT PLAGUE HIS WORLD."
LOOKS LIKE THE **LIZARD-GUY** IS THE WAY TO GO.
I THINK SO, TOO.
EXCEPT FOR ONE BIG PROBLEM THAT NO ONE WANTS TO BRING UP...
...WHENEVER WE VISITED OTHER REALITIES, THINGS ALWAYS GOT... **COMPLICATED**.
BUT ALWAYS THE TIMEBREAKERS COULD TELL US WHAT WE NEEDED TO **DO** TO MAKE THINGS RIGHT.
NOW A LOT OF THEIR EQUIPMENT IS BROKEN. THEY DON'T KNOW **WHAT** EFFECT OUR VISITS MIGHT HAVE.
WHAT IF BY APPROACHING THIS CONNORS PERSON, WE END UP MAKING THINGS **WORSE** IN HIS REALITY?
CAL IS **COUNTING** ON US, BEAK. DON'T START THINKING UP REASONS WHY WE **CAN'T** HELP HIM.

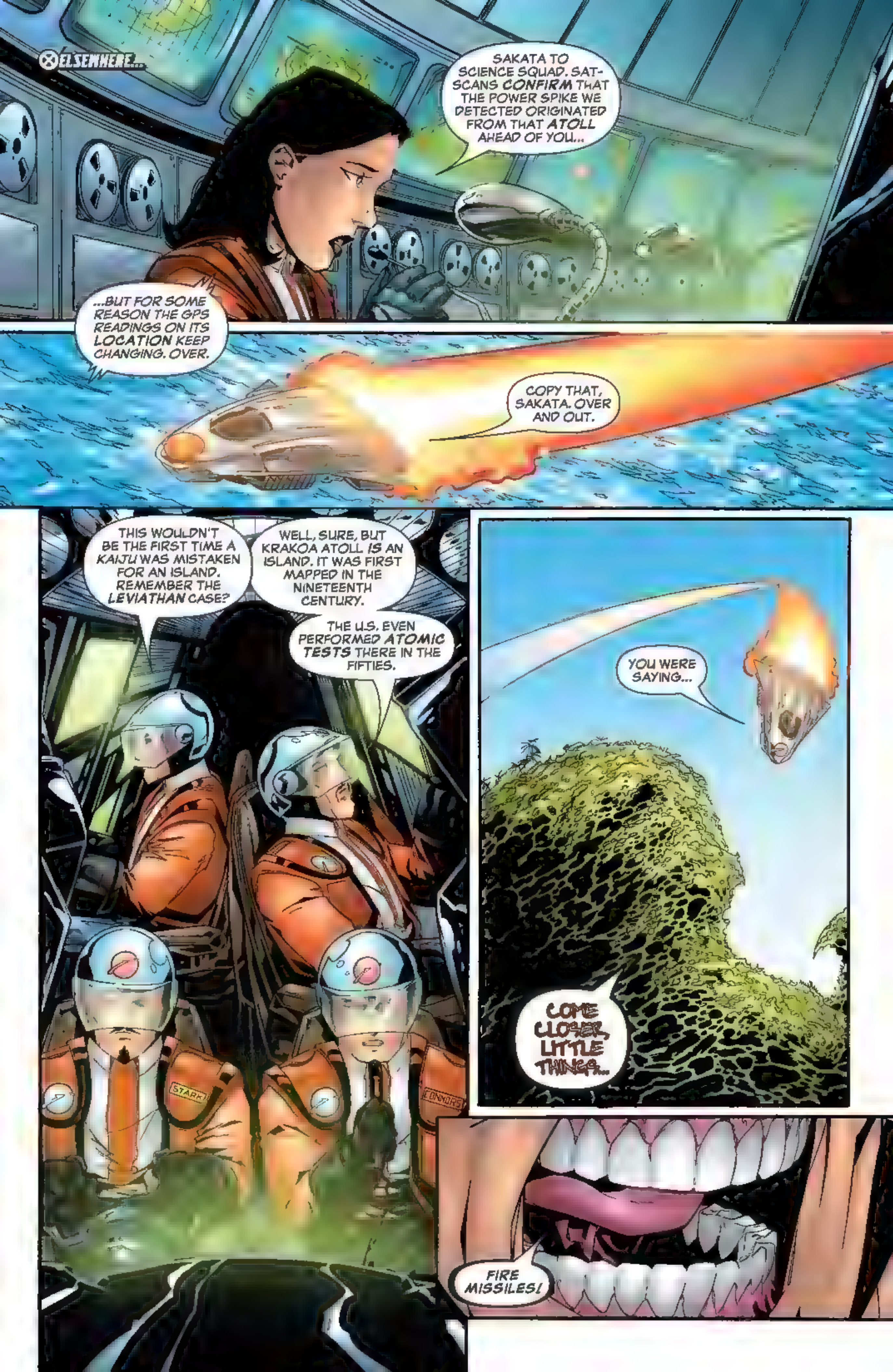

PLEASE CONSIDER WARNING. OUR UNINFORMED EXCURSIONS CAUSED TEMPORAL DAMAGE--
YOU'D DO BEST TO KEEP QUIET!
YOU KIDNAPPED US, LIED TO US, AND ONCE WE TIE UP THE LOOSE ENDS, WE'RE SHUTTING YOU DOWN!
CAN WE...? I MEAN, THE JOB'S NOT FINISHED YET-- THERE ARE MORE BROKEN REALITIES OUT THERE THAT NEED FIXING.
THOSE WORLDS'LL JUST HAVETA GET ALONG WITHOUT US.
BUT THE TIMEBROKER SAID OUR OWN REALITIES HAVE BEEN ALTERED SO WE CAN'T GO HOME UNTIL WE FINISH THE JOB.
THAT'S JUST SOMETHIN' THEY MADE UP SO WE'D DO AS WE'RE TOLD! THE EARTH ME AN' BLINK CAME FROM IS CARRYIN' ON JUST FINE.
IS THIS TRUE?
YES. WE ONLY SOUGHT TO COMPEL COOPERATION.
THEN WE CAN ALL GO HOME!
BUT SO MUCH DAMAGE LEFT UNREPAIRED!
THAT WAS YOUR FAULT. THE UNIVERSE AIN'T GONNA COLLAPSE IF WE DON'T CLEAN UP EVERY LAST BIT OF YOUR MESS.

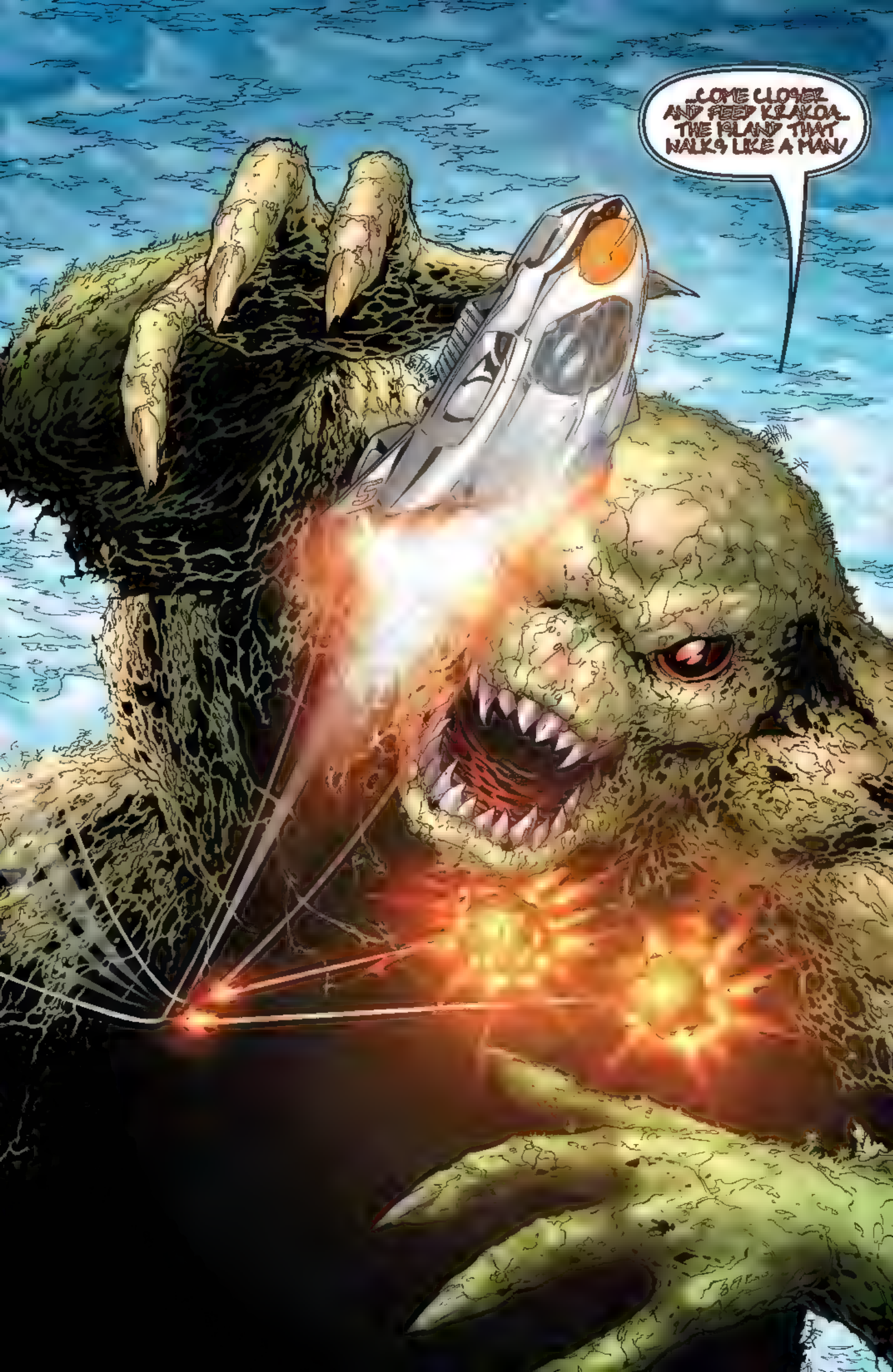

OKAY...WHAT IF WE GO AND THEY JUST RECRUIT **ANOTHER** SET OF EXILES TO DO THE JOB?
THEN WE'LL MAKE THE TIMEBREAKERS GO HOME, TOO.
BUT IF WE LEAVE THIS PLACE ABANDONED, **WHO KNOWS** WHO MIGHT DISCOVER IT NEXT? WHAT IF THEY'RE **WORSE** THAN THE TIMEBREAKERS?
THEN WE **DESTROY** THIS PLACE.
WHAT WOULD THAT **DO** TO THE MULTIVERSE?
NOT TO MENTION THAT THIS OBSERVATORY IS A **UNIQUE** SCIENTIFIC RESOURCE.
A **DANGEROUS** SCIENTIFIC RESOURCE, YOU MEAN.
AND WHAT IF WHOEVER **MADE** THIS PLACE CAME BACK AND FOUND OUT WE'D DESTROYED IT? WHAT **THEN?**
WHY ARE YOU EVEN **ARGUIN'?!** DON'T YOU **WANNA** GO HOME?!
MAYBE WE **WILL** SHUT THIS PLACE DOWN, BUT FIRST YOU PEOPLE BETTER GET YOUR **PRIORITIES** STRAIGHT!
MORPH...?
YOU SHOULD **REST--**
NO, HEATHER. THERE'S MORE **IMPORTANT** THINGS TO DO, AND I'M **NOT** GONNA MISS 'EM.


WE'RE GOING TO TAKE CARE OF OUR OWN, AND IF IT MEANS TAKING *RISKS*... WELL, SINCE WHEN DID *THAT* STOP US?
I SAW MIMIC IN THAT *WALL* ON MY WAY HERE. WE'RE GONNA DO WHATEVER IT *TAKES* TO GET HIM PATCHED UP.
NOT TO MENTION *T-BIRD*, AND WHOEVER ELSE IS BURIED ALIVE IN THERE. THAT WALL IS AN *ABOMINATION.*
BEAK, WE'RE GONNA GET YOU *BACK TOGETHER* WITH YOUR WIFE AND KIDS.
WIFE AND KIDS...?
HE GOT AN EARLY START.
AND AS MUCH AS I'VE *HATED* THIS LIFE AND HATED YOU FOR *FORCING* US INTO IT, THERE'S A *REASON* I STAYED WITH THE TEAM WHEN I HAD A CHANCE TO GO HOME!
THERE ARE *DOZENS* OF MESSED-UP EARTHS OUT THERE--WHOLE UNIVERSES THAT MIGHT *DIE* IF WE DON'T HELP THEM!
CAN *ANY* OF YOU REALLY GO BACK TO YOUR OLD LIVES WITH *THAT* ON YOUR CONSCIENCE?
ME, EITHER.
NOW THERE'S JUST ONE MORE THING, AND I ABSOLUTELY *INSIST* ON DOING IT *NEXT*...

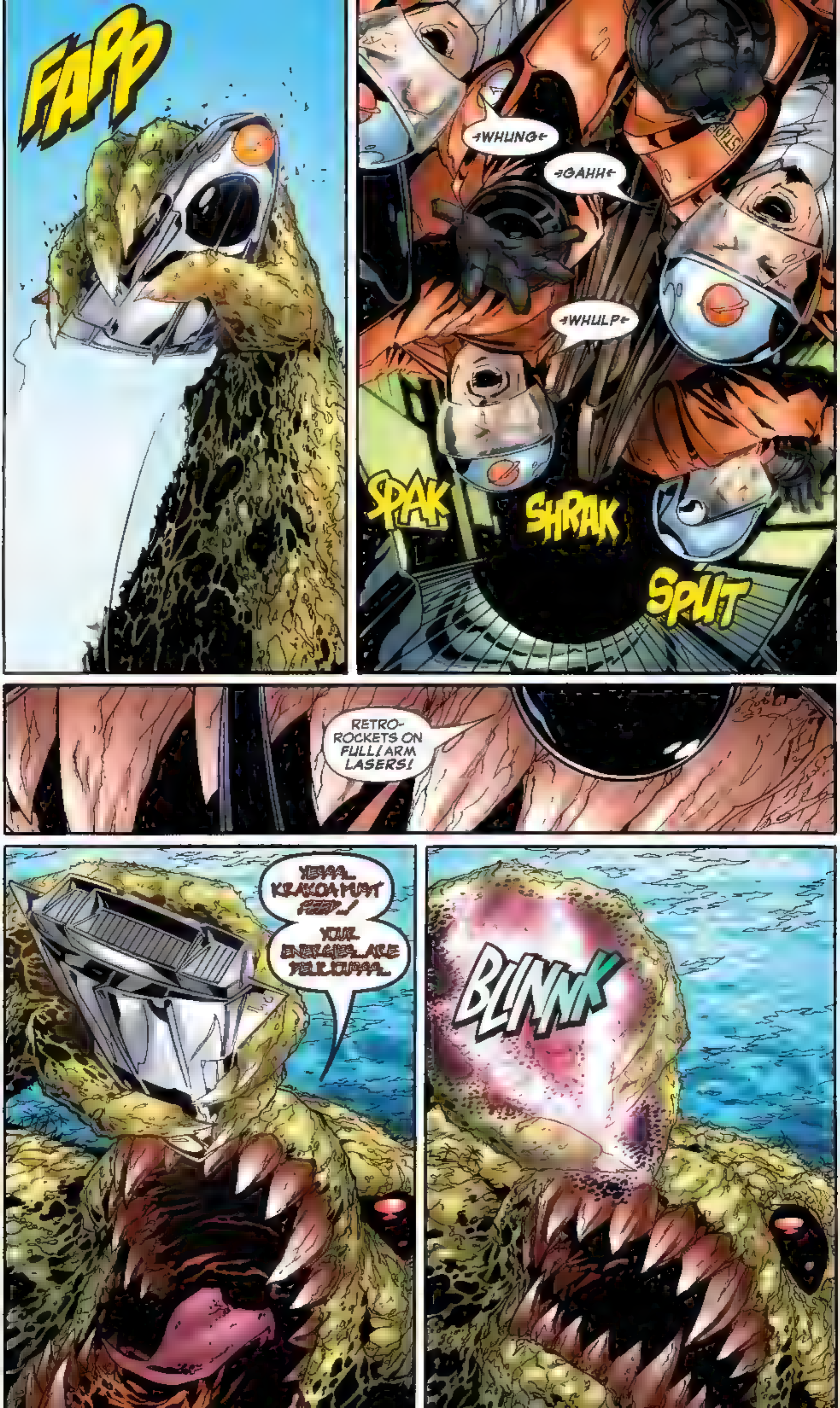

MARIKO YASHIDA
"SUNFIRE"
1980 - 2004
...ASHES TO ASHES...
...DUST TO DUST.
AMEN.
⇋SNFF⇋...I JUST WANT TO THANK YOU AGAIN...FOR BRINGING HER BACK HERE.
MUCH AS I LOVED HER, IF IT WAS UP TO ME, I'D'VE BURIED HER IN THE REALITY WHERE SHE WAS BORN.
ME, TOO.
I THOUGHT HER PARENTS HAD A RIGHT TO VISIT HER GRAVE...EVEN IF THEY DIDN'T APPROVE OF WHO SHE WAS.
BUT MORPH INSISTED WE DO IT HERE. HE WOULDN'T TAKE "NO" FOR AN ANSWER.

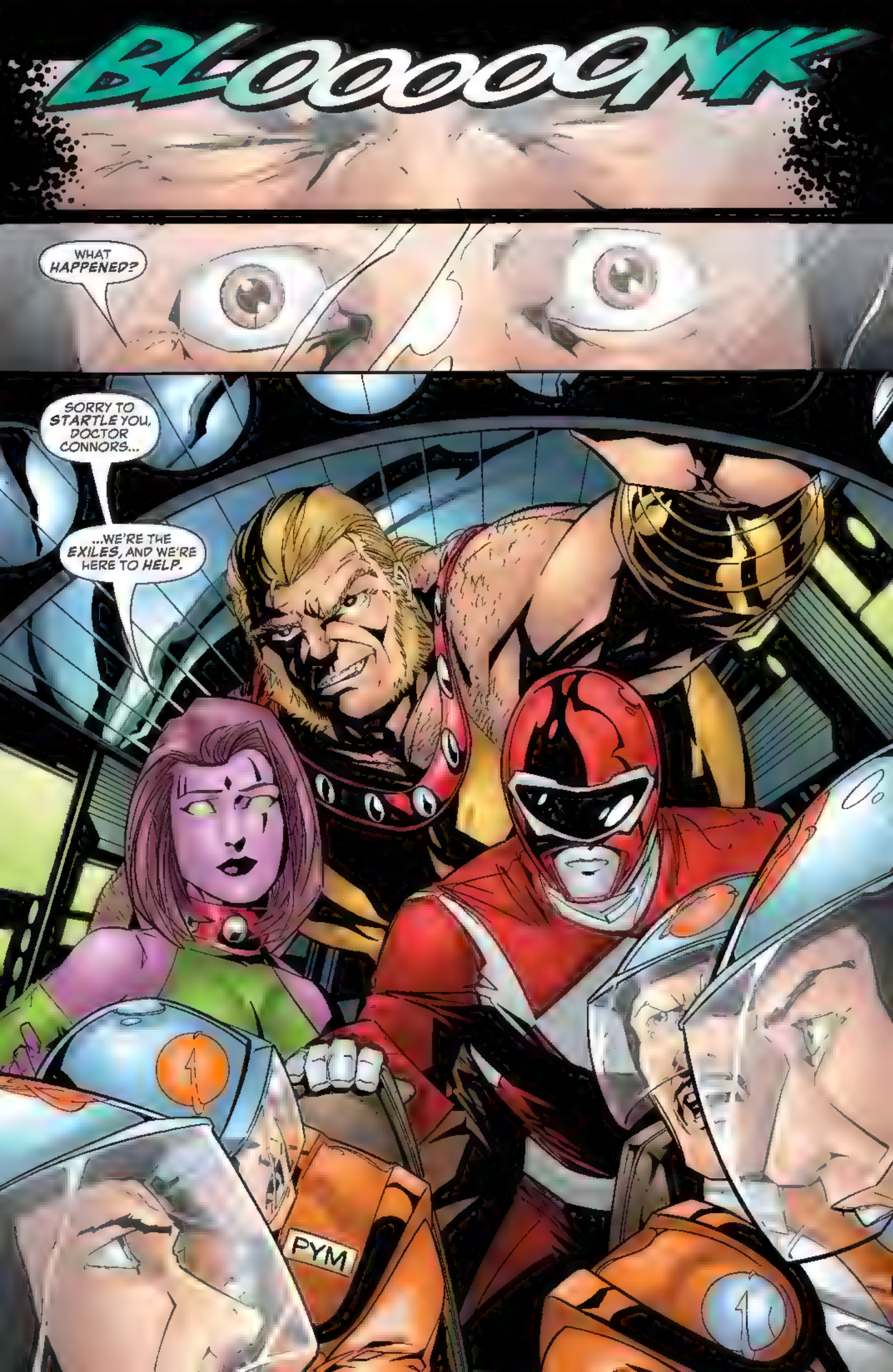

A FEW MONTHS AGO, WHEN YOU EXILES GOT SPLIT UP AND SENT TO SEPARATE REALITIES, MARIKO RETURNED HERE FOR A FEW WEEKS.
THIRTY-NINE DAYS, TO BE EXACT.
I KNOW, SPIDER-WOMAN.
IT WAS A GIFT, THAT EXTRA TIME TOGETHER. SHE TOLD ME A LOT ABOUT HERSELF...
...AND SHE ALSO TOLD ME ABOUT YOUR FEELINGS FOR HER.
I'M SORRY...I DIDN'T MEAN ANYTHING BY IT. SHE JUST...I COULDN'T HELP IT.
BUT THERE'S NO QUESTION--YOU WERE THE LOVE OF MARIKO'S LIFE.
AND YOU LOVED HER ENOUGH TO MAKE SURE SHE'D SPEND ETERNITY WITH ME.
THAT HAS TO BE THE MOST UNSELFISH THING I EVER HEARD OF.
IT'S A COMFORT, YOU KNOW...HAVING SOMEONE ELSE WHO LOVED HER...TO SHARE THE HURT.


ELSEWHERE...
SAKATA TO SCIENCE SQUAD. SAT-SCANS CONFIRM THAT THE POWER SPIKE WE DETECTED ORIGINATED FROM THAT ATOLL AHEAD OF YOU...
...BUT FOR SOME REASON THE GPS READINGS ON ITS LOCATION KEEP CHANGING. OVER.
COPY THAT, SAKATA. OVER AND OUT.
THIS WOULDN'T BE THE FIRST TIME A KAIJU WAS MISTAKEN FOR AN ISLAND. REMEMBER THE LEVIATHAN CASE?
WELL, SURE, BUT KRAKOA ATOLL IS AN ISLAND. IT WAS FIRST MAPPED IN THE NINETEENTH CENTURY.
THE U.S. EVEN PERFORMED ATOMIC TESTS THERE IN THE FIFTIES.
STARK
CONNORS
YOU WERE SAYING...
COME CLOSER, LITTLE THINGS...
FIRE MISSILES!



...COME CLOSER AND FEED KRAKOA... THE ISLAND THAT WALKS LIKE A MAN!


FAPP
-WHUNG-
-GAHH-
-WHULP-
SPAK
SHRAK
SPUT
RETRO-ROCKETS ON FULL! ARM LASERS!
YESSS... KRAKOA MUST FEED..!
YOUR ENERGIES...ARE DELICIOUSSS...
BLINNK


BLOOOOONK
WHAT HAPPENED?
SORRY TO STARTLE YOU, DOCTOR CONNORS...
...WE'RE THE EXILES, AND WE'RE HERE TO HELP.
PYM

REALITY CHECK

X-MEN TITLES

HOUSE OF M 3 & 4: The Marvel Universe has gone cuckoo-bananas! And a S.H.I.E.L.D. agent named James Howlett is desperately trying to discover the truth! By Brian Michael Bendis and Olivier Coipel and guest-starring the entire Marvel Universe!

UNCANNY X-MEN 462 It's the House of M! God save the Queen! Captain Britain is back! The Omniverse is on the brink of annihilation and Cap is the only one who can save us all! By Chris Claremont and Alan Davis!

EXILES 66 & 67: Now that the Exiles have freed themselves from the Timebroker, what do they do now? Well, making sure Mimic doesn't die is a good start

NIGHTCRAWLER 8 Kurt continues his trip down memory lane as he and Wolverine visit the eerie forests of Bavaria where Kurt was raised by gypsies. But what dark forces are compelling him to revisit his past?

MUTOPIA X 1: It's the House of M! Special investigator Ismael Ortega, and ordinary cop Lucas Bishop team up to stop the Human Resistance Movement from committing another horrific act of terrorism!

ASTONISHING X-MEN 11: The most powerful telepath in the world takes on the sentient alien computer program that can do ...well, anything! It's Xavier vs. Danger brought to you by Joss Whedon and John Cassaday

WEAPON X: DAYS OF FUTURE NOW 1 Frank Tieri's Weapon X saga continues! This time the gloves are off!

NEW X-MEN 16: It's the House of M! S.H.I.E.L.D.'s elite group of young agents, the Hellions, are about to go on the mission that will change their lives forever!

X-MEN: KITTY PRYDE – SHADOW & FLAME 2: What long forgotten villain has returned to gain vengeance upon poor little Kitty Pryde? We don't know, but there are ninjas involved! With art by legendary X-Artist, Paul Smith!

NEW X-MEN: HELLIONS 3: All the Hellions wildest dreams have come true! Now all they have to do is recover a mysterious object from a highly guarded government facility...looks like the Hellions might be in trouble!

NYX 6. No, we're serious. NYX is back. With two issues left, you don't want to miss this!

CABLE/DEADPOOL 17: It's the House of M. Deadpool, Cannonball, and Syrin finally find Cable! But he's different ...how different? How about a foot-tall-and-wearing-diapers different?

ORORO: BEFORE THE STORM 2: A young Storm embarks on the most dangerous journey of her life!

X-MEN THE END: BOOK TWO 5. Chris Claremont continues the final tale of the X-Men! And the shocking truth behind Sinister and Gambit is revealed!

WOLVERINE 30. Mark Millar's run on Wolverine continues down its path of amazing insanity! Wolverine is cutting his way through just about every bad guy on earth. Up next: the new Supreme Hydra!

X-MEN 173: Someone new might be joining the X-Men? Who could it be? Certainly not one of the X-Men's oldest and deadliest foes! Of course not!

Hello, you dimension-hopping dilettantes! Tony Bedard here, back to answer more of the scintillating snail-mail you've zinged across the zillion zip-codes comprising this miraculous multiverse of ours. Well...at least two of you zinged, anyhow. The rest of you need to bust out the paper and pencil and tell us what you think about the issue you just read and about this series in general. And that you think I deserve a raise. Now, on to your letters...

Greetings, Mr. Bedard,

Before I get into what I wanted to say, I'd just like to commend your run on EXILES thus far. You've introduced a variety of new, interesting members (e.g., Namora, Tanaraq, Holocaust), and your explanation behind the Exiles' creation and missions is certainly interesting. I've also enjoyed having Beak as a team member. In my opinion, he's one of the only good things that came out of Grant Morrison's run on NEW X-MEN. And now, he's got two Hyperions helping him out.. sweet!

Now, on to another matter of importance, and I know it won't make me popular with other EXILES fans, but I have to say it: It's high time Mimic got killed on a mission

Now don't get me wrong, I like Mimic. He's been a great character to have around, and his powers are definitely an asset. Lately, though, he hasn't really done much, character-wise—he's just been hanging around, worrying non-stop about Blink or fighting with Sabretooth I think you guys have run out of things to do with his character

I'm not completely inhuman, keep in mind—if he does die, I will be upset, and he will be missed. And I know it seems unlikely, since you once said that he was one of your favorite characters, but...well, Hawkeye was apparently one of Brian Michael Bendis's favorites, and look what happened to him

You don't have to listen to this request, and you don't have to kill him for a good long time Just keep it in mind

Gregory Cruikshank

Well, Gregory, I was thinking about doing a soul-searing, life-changing story in which Mimic—ready for this?—shaves off that little beard thing! Or, better yet, we discover that the "beardlet" is really an alien parasite that has been controlling the Exiles from the start! Unfortunately, there's a mind-controlling mustache story coming up in NEW AVENGERS, so Editorial is telling me I'll have to kill off poor Calvin instead. The thing is...he's my favorite Exile... (cue the ominous music: dum-dum-DUM-dum...) Or, I'll just give him horrible acne. Stay tuned to see which one!

Hiya Marvel!

Well, there's just one way to describe you guys: you're way cool! Just think about it... Holocaust?! Man, I thought we'd never see this guy again, let alone in a comic like the EXILES. As someone who was blessed to read the original adventures of the Age of Apocalypse ten years back, man, I was like 11 years old at the time, this is a real treat! This is what I had hoped the 2099 celebration from a while back would be, using all the old characters again

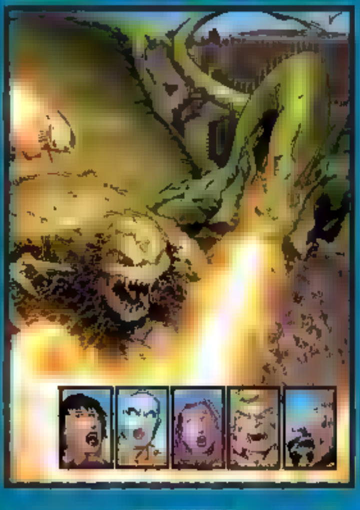
I'm glad that Beak's off the team, and hope he'll be back in the mainstream universe where he belongs. But I would like to know what happened to the birdbrain. Though I didn't like him much, he had potential and I don't think it's very nice to just write someone off like that. But, Holocaust rules and I hope he stays on the team for a while! One quick request please: let the Exiles visit the 2099 Universe, please?

Raymond Baenen
Netherlands

Raymond, you must've been reading my mind! I've been working on a BEAK 2099 pitch which no one in the Marvel offices will take seriously. But armed with your letter I am going to get this one through! In the meantime, you'll be hearing about our upcoming Exiles saga, entitled "World Tour," starting with EXILES #69 in which our heroes travel to a new reality and meet their worst enemy yet. By the time it's all over, the Exiles lineup will be tragically altered forever, your 2099 itch will be scratched, and keen-eyed readers will look back at this letters column as a warning from history. Oh, yes...yes they will. Mwa-ha-ha-ha-ha! Now please write me more letters. I'm lonely.

–Tony B.

NEXT ISSUE:



AHHH! REAL MONSTERS!

AN RYAN NI LOWE KE ARTS QU ADA

MARVEL
67
BEDARD
CALAFIORE
MCKENNA
EXILES

Parallel universes. Alternate realities. Some are like the world we know, others completely different. A few tragic realities are damaged, twisted and downright dangerous. That's where you'll find the EXILES, a team of mutants who repair the broken links in the chains of Time, restoring the cosmic balance.

EXILES

PREVIOUSLY

Plucked from their own separate realities, BLINK, SABRETOOTH, MIMIC, MORPH, HEATHER HUDSON and BEAK were instructed to travel from one doomed version of Earth to the next, saving each world from its own disastrous flaws. Only if they completed their impossible missions would the mysterious TIMEBROKER return them to their former lives.

Unfortunately, it was all a **lie.**

The Exiles traveled to the Timebroker's seat of power, an extra-dimensional observatory carved entirely from energized crystal. Once there, they found no Timebroker at all. Instead, the "Crystal Palace" was operated by alien scientists hiding behind the Timebroker facade. These insect-like beings, dubbed the TIMEBREAKERS, were the ones who originally damaged the realities the Exiles must repair. And the news got even worse: an immensely powerful being named HYPERION had wrested control of the Crystal Palace from the Timebreakers and now threatened every reality across the Multiverse.

The Exiles defeated Hyperion, but Mimic was grievously injured and their teammate NAMORA was killed. Now, in the aftermath of that titanic struggle, our heroes search for a way to save Mimic from his massive injuries. A meta-human medical expert, DOCTOR STEPHEN STRANGE, was called in to help, but their best chance to heal Mimic lies on a world plagued by giant monsters.

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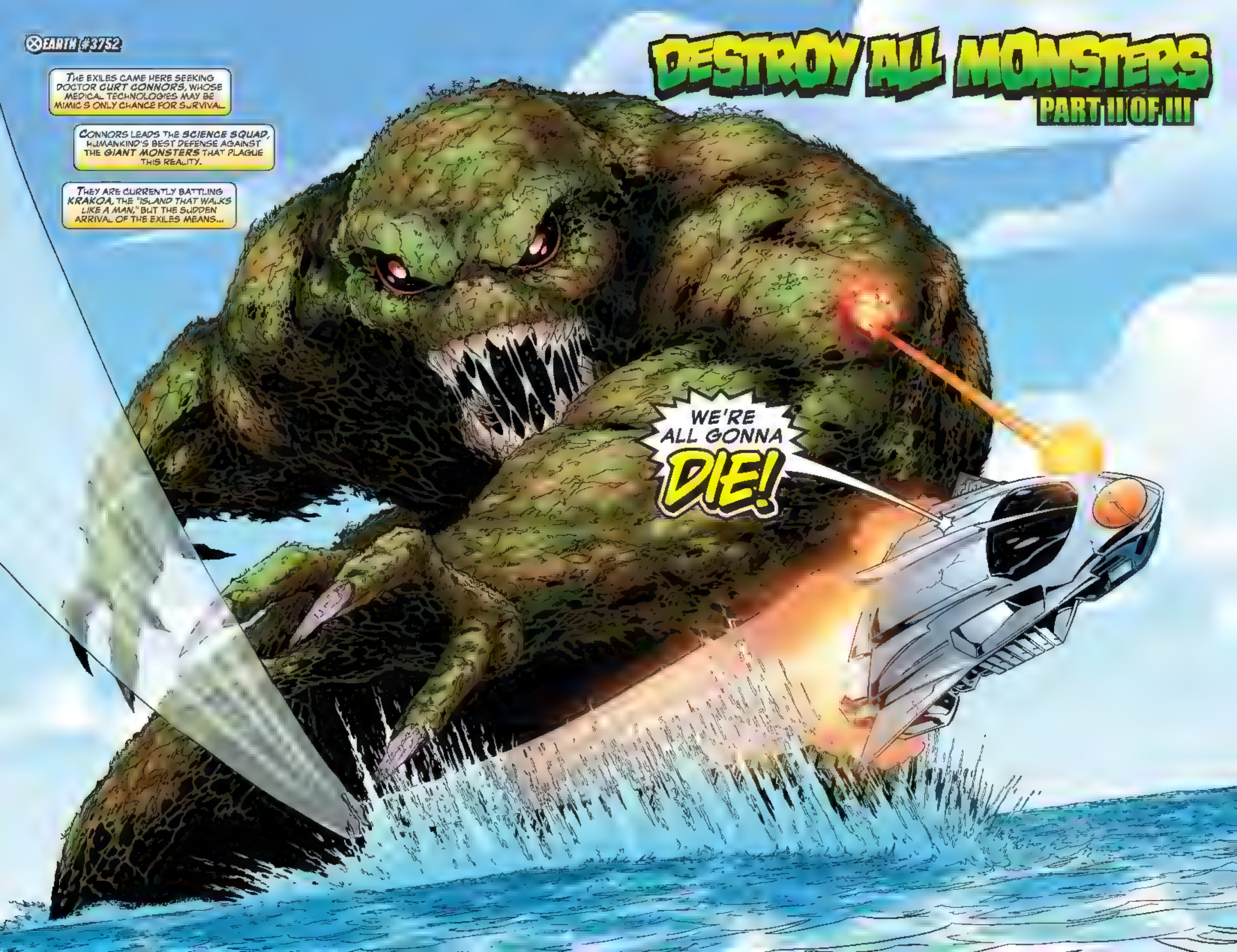
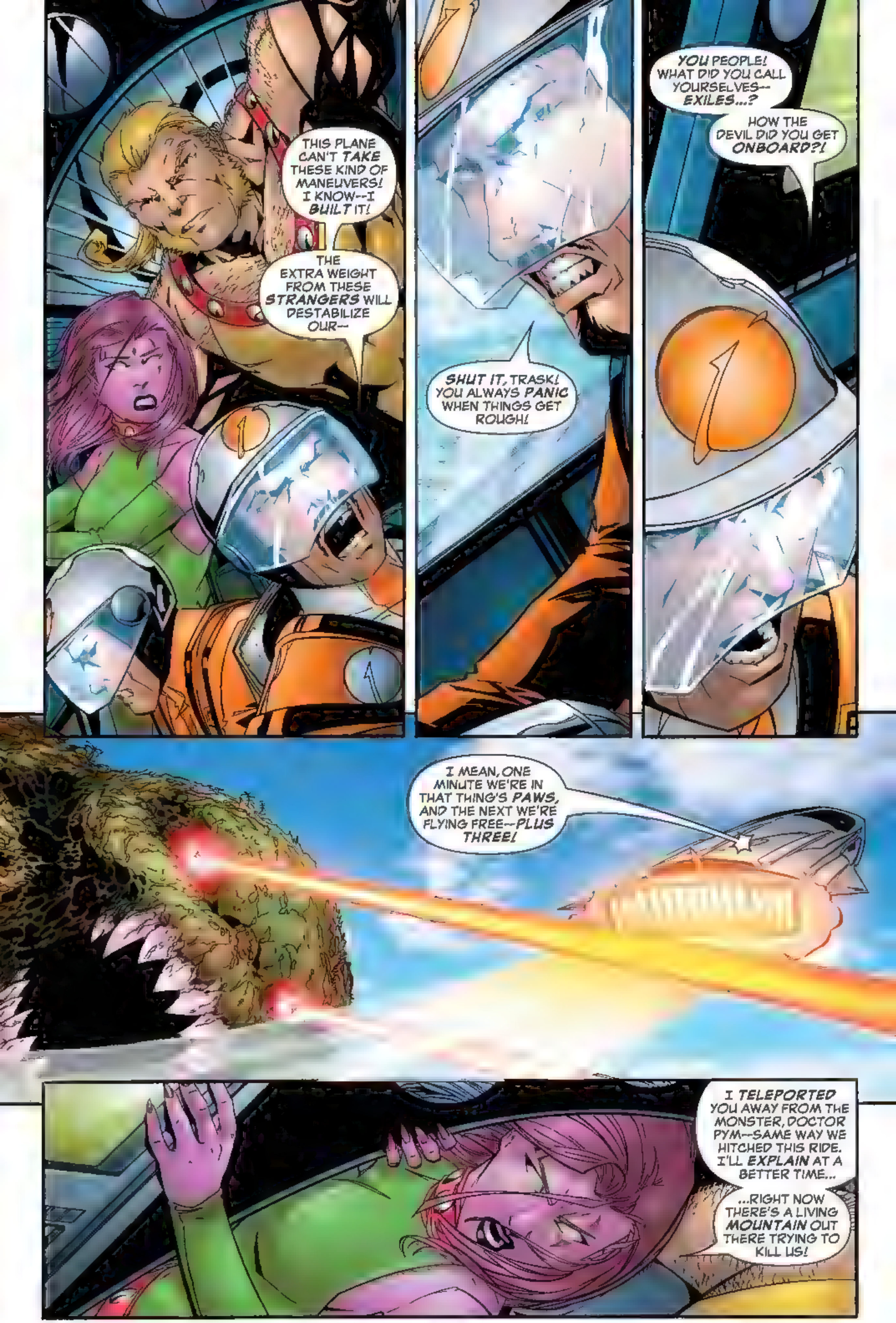
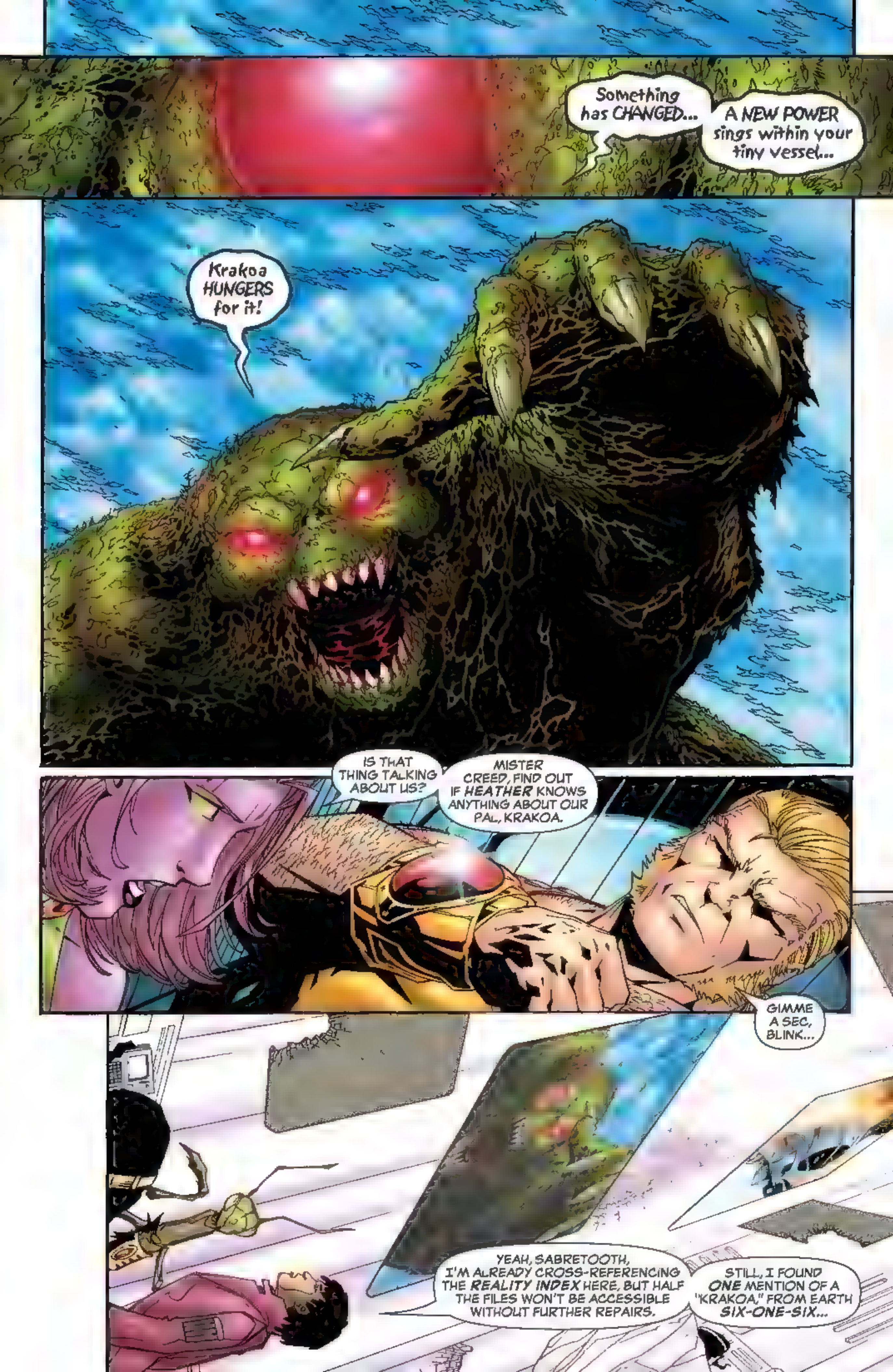
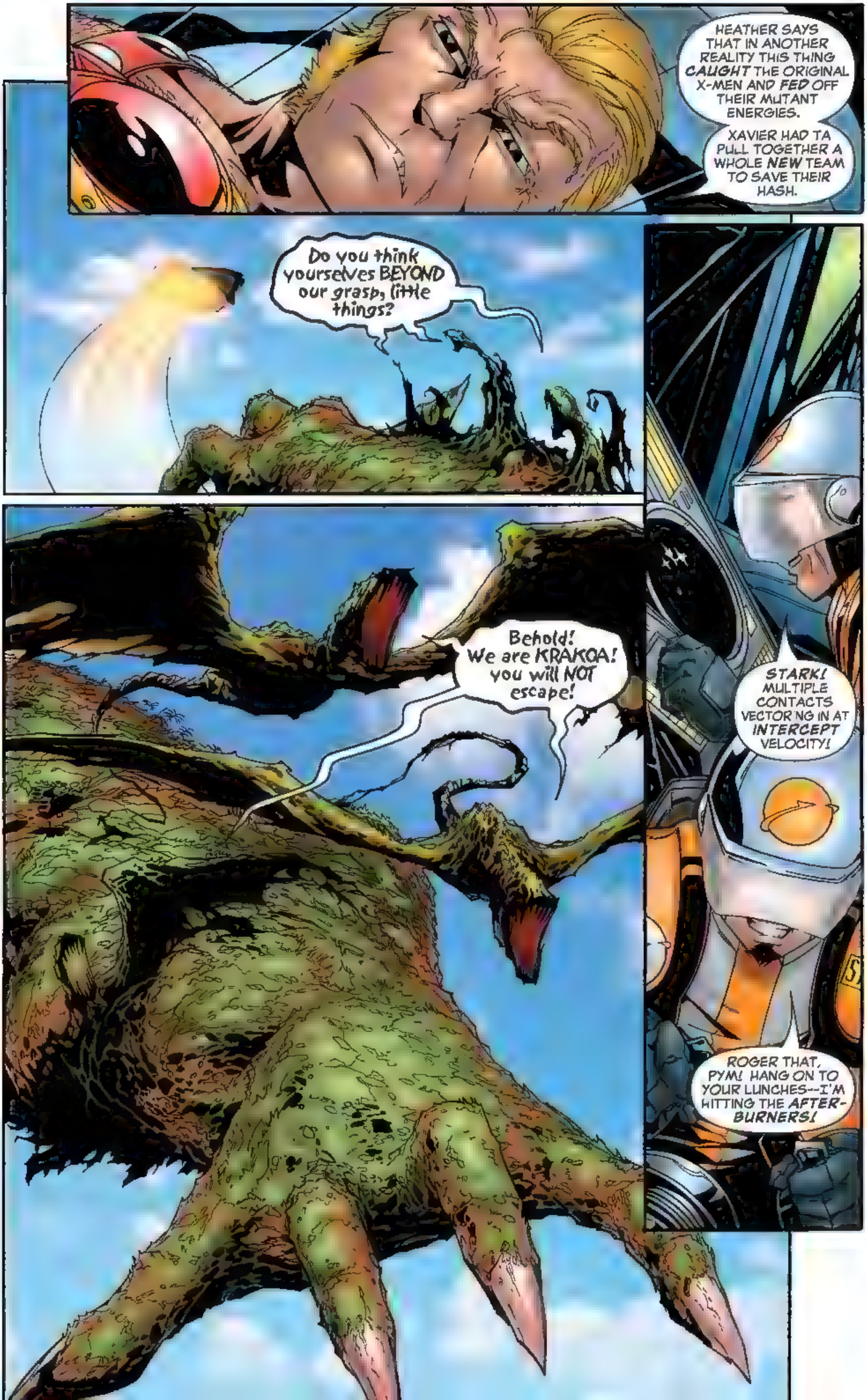
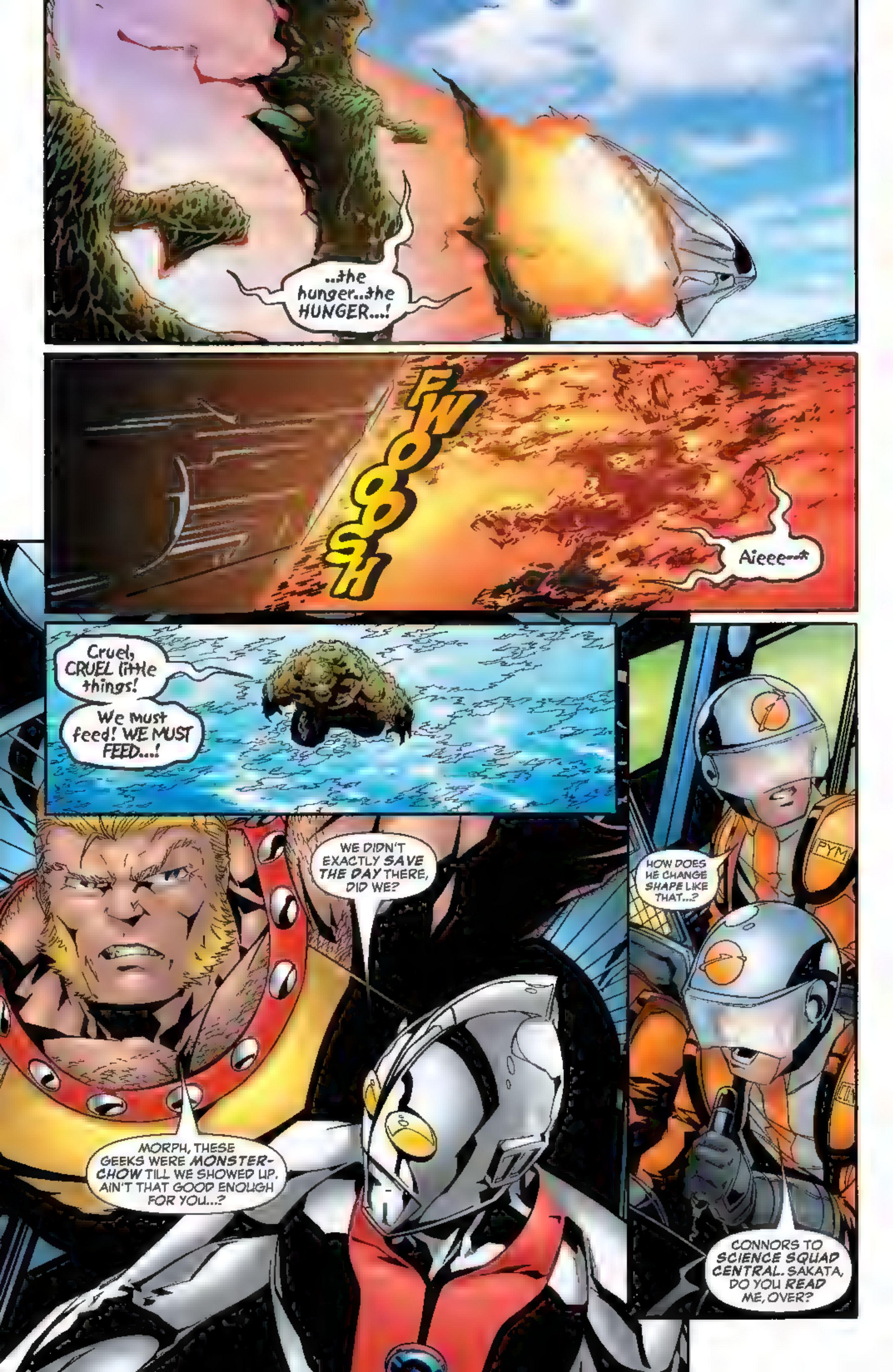
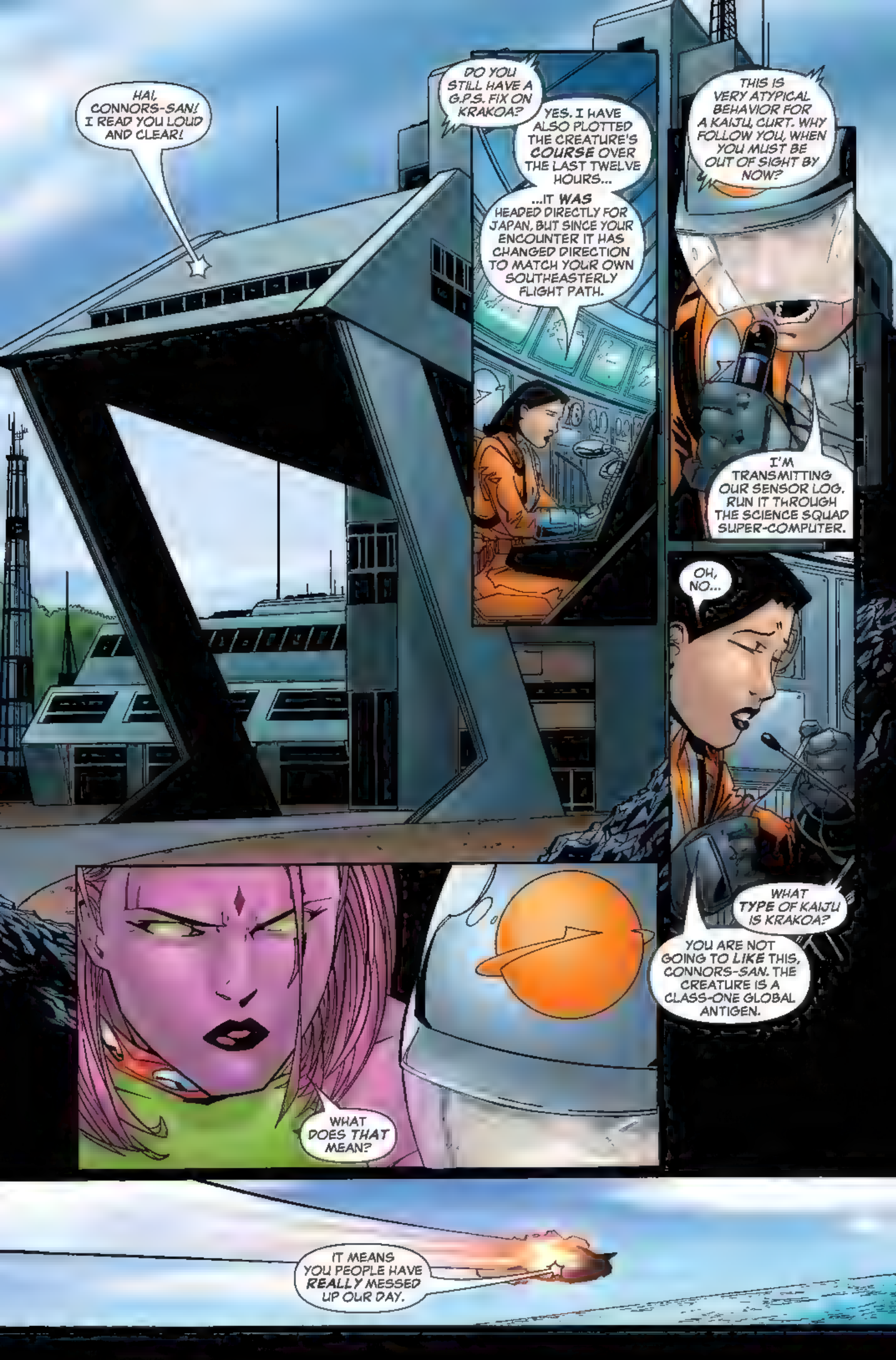

EARTH #3752
DESTROY ALL MONSTERS
PART II OF III
THE EXILES CAME HERE SEEKING DOCTOR CURT CONNORS, WHOSE MEDICAL TECHNOLOGIES MAY BE MIMIC'S ONLY CHANCE FOR SURVIVAL.
CONNORS LEADS THE SCIENCE SQUAD, HUMANKIND'S BEST DEFENSE AGAINST THE GIANT MONSTERS THAT PLAGUE THIS REALITY.
THEY ARE CURRENTLY BATTLING KRAKOA, THE "ISLAND THAT WALKS LIKE A MAN," BUT THE SUDDEN ARRIVAL OF THE EXILES MEANS...
WE'RE ALL GONNA DIE!

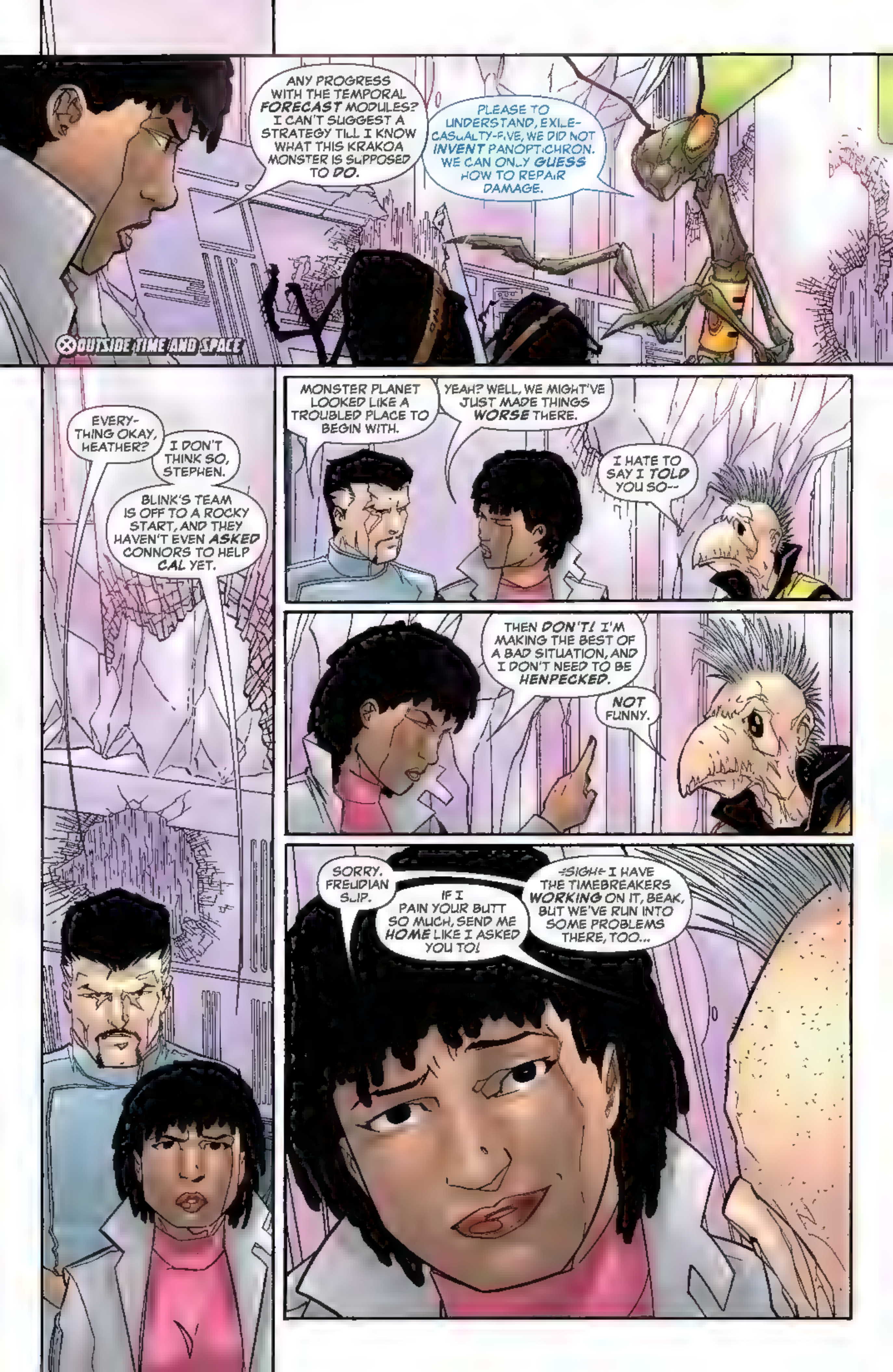

THIS PLANE CAN'T *TAKE* THESE KIND OF MANEUVERS! I KNOW--I *BUILT* IT!
THE EXTRA WEIGHT FROM THESE *STRANGERS* WILL DESTABILIZE OUR--
SHUT IT, TRASK! YOU ALWAYS *PANIC* WHEN THINGS GET ROUGH!
YOU PEOPLE! WHAT DID YOU CALL YOURSELVES-- *EXILES...?*
HOW THE DEVIL DID YOU GET *ONBOARD?!*
I MEAN, ONE MINUTE WE'RE IN THAT THING'S *PAWS,* AND THE NEXT WE'RE FLYING FREE--*PLUS THREE!*
I *TELEPORTED* YOU AWAY FROM THE MONSTER, DOCTOR PYM--SAME WAY WE HITCHED THIS RIDE. I'LL *EXPLAIN* AT A BETTER TIME...
...RIGHT NOW THERE'S A LIVING *MOUNTAIN* OUT THERE TRYING TO KILL US!

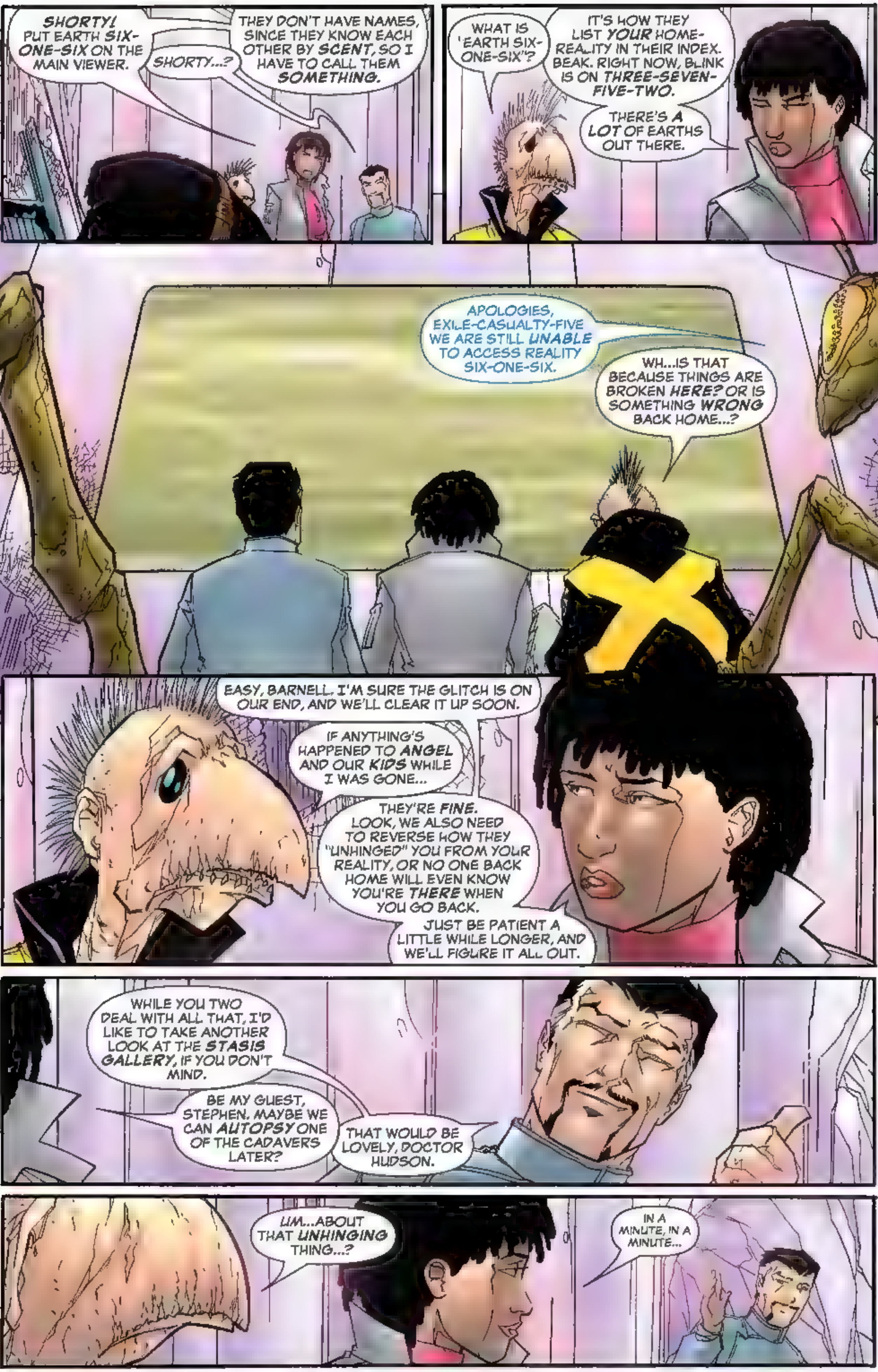

Something has CHANGED...
A NEW POWER sings within your tiny vessel...
Krakoa HUNGERS for it!
IS THAT THING TALKING ABOUT US?
MISTER CREED, FIND OUT IF *HEATHER* KNOWS ANYTHING ABOUT OUR PAL, KRAKOA.
GIMME A SEC, BLINK...
YEAH, SABRETOOTH, I'M ALREADY CROSS-REFERENCING THE *REALITY INDEX* HERE, BUT HALF THE FILES WON'T BE ACCESSIBLE WITHOUT FURTHER REPAIRS.
STILL, I FOUND *ONE* MENTION OF A "KRAKOA," FROM EARTH *SIX-ONE-SIX*...

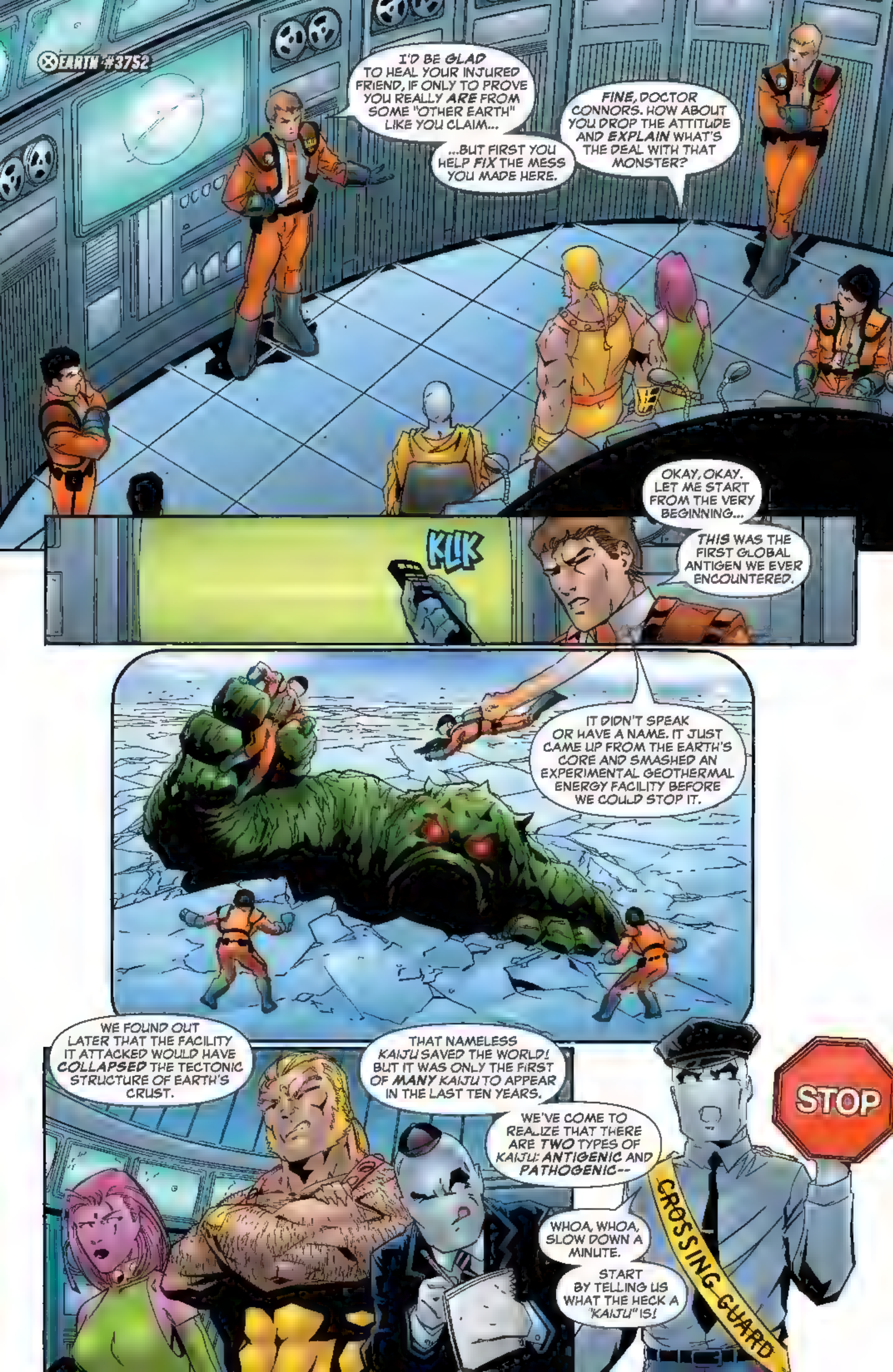

HEATHER SAYS THAT IN ANOTHER REALITY THIS THING *CAUGHT* THE ORIGINAL X-MEN AND *FED* OFF THEIR MUTANT ENERGIES.
XAVIER HAD TA PULL TOGETHER A WHOLE *NEW* TEAM TO SAVE THEIR HASH.
Do you think yourselves BEYOND our grasp, little things?
Behold! We are KRAKOA! you will NOT escape!
STARK! MULTIPLE CONTACTS VECTORING IN AT *INTERCEPT* VELOCITY!
ROGER THAT, PYM! HANG ON TO YOUR LUNCHES--I'M HITTING THE *AFTER-BURNERS!*

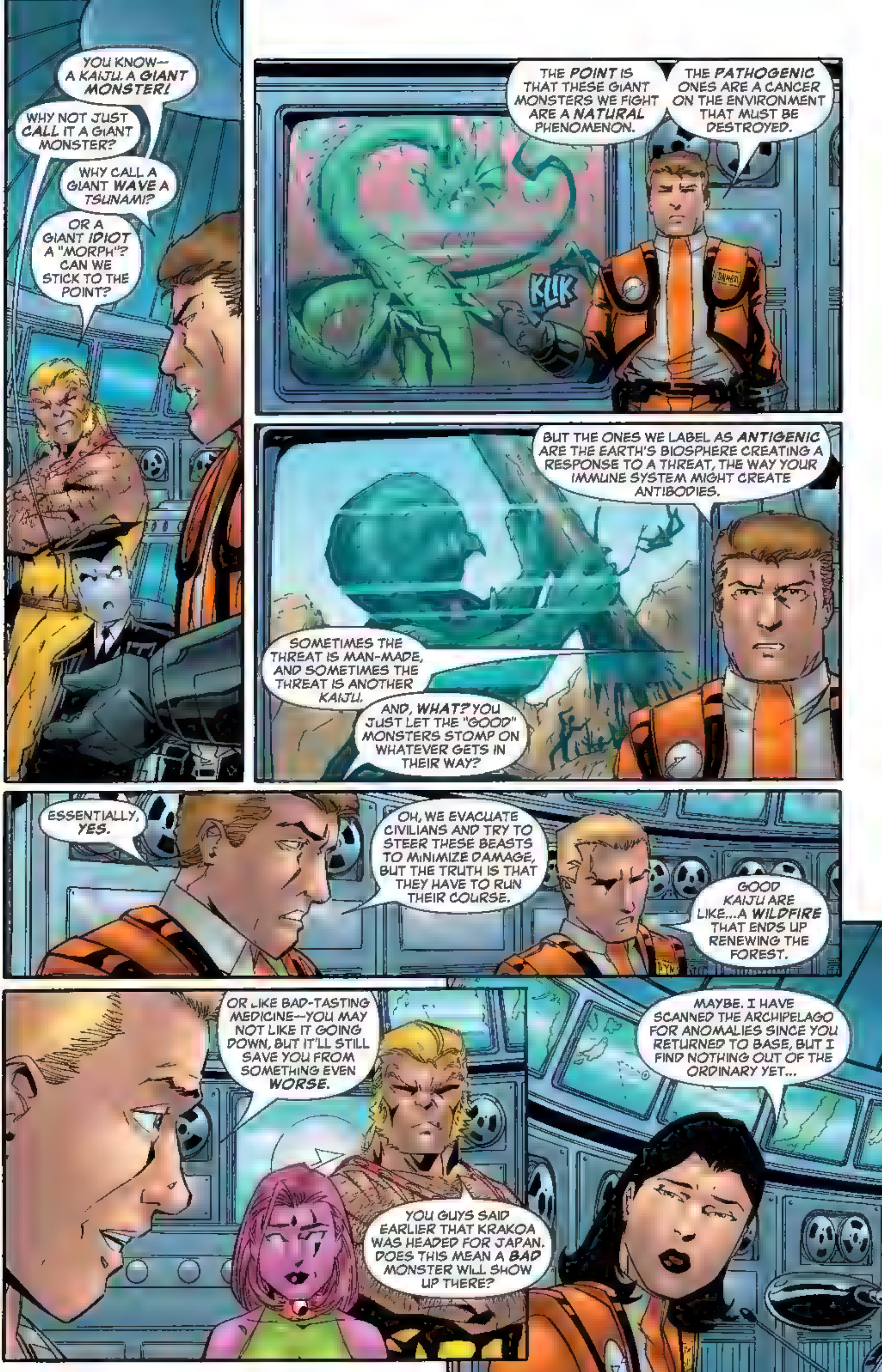

..the hunger..the HUNGER...!
FWOOOSH
Aieee--*
Cruel, CRUEL little things!
We must feed! WE MUST FEED...!
WE DIDN'T EXACTLY SAVE THE DAY THERE, DID WE?
MORPH, THESE GEEKS WERE MONSTER-CHOW TILL WE SHOWED UP. AIN'T THAT GOOD ENOUGH FOR YOU...?
HOW DOES HE CHANGE SHAPE LIKE THAT...?
PYM
CONNORS TO SCIENCE SQUAD CENTRAL. SAKATA, DO YOU READ ME, OVER?

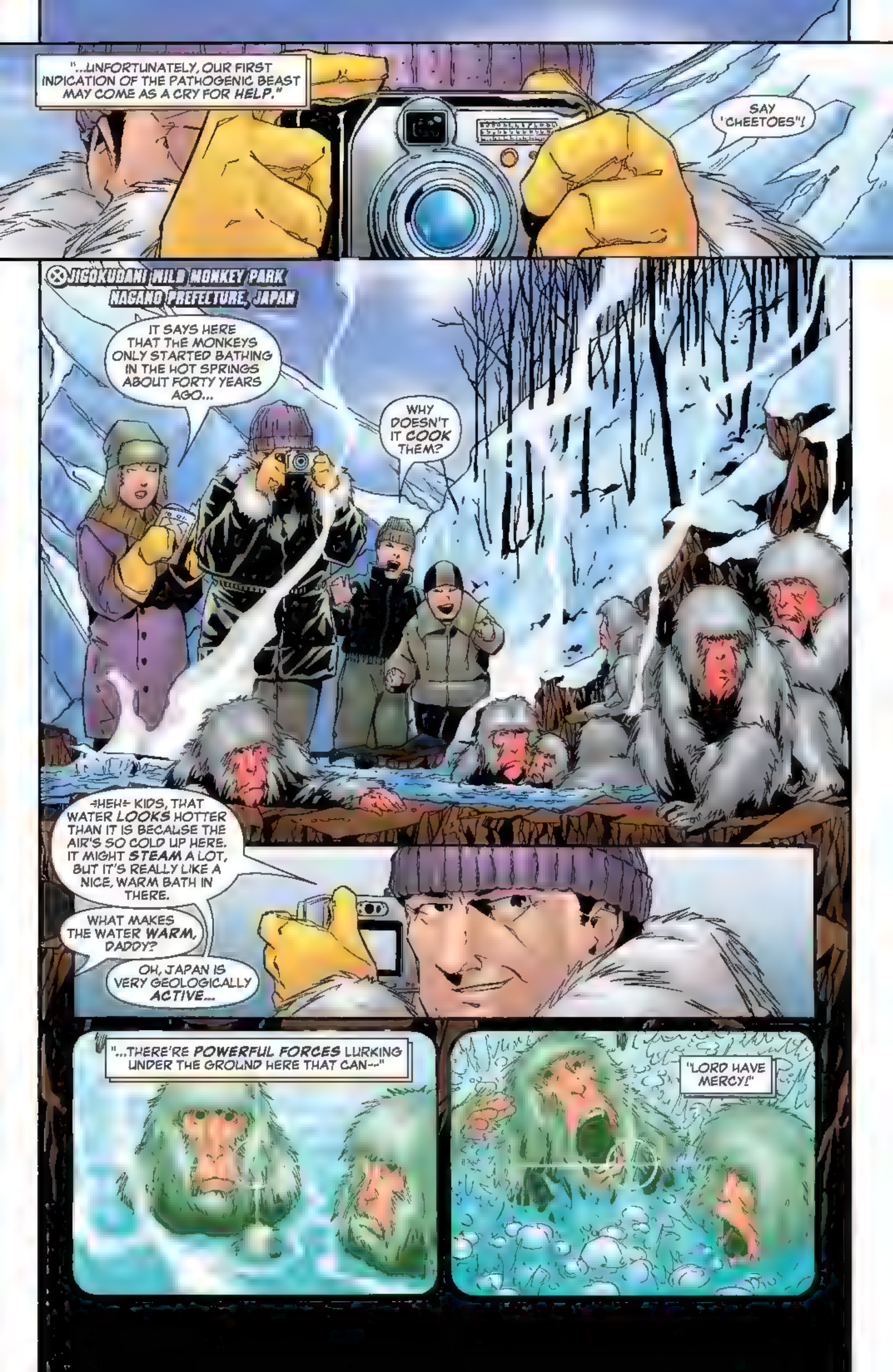

HAI, CONNORS-SAN! I READ YOU LOUD AND CLEAR!
DO YOU STILL HAVE A G.P.S. FIX ON KRAKOA?
YES. I HAVE ALSO PLOTTED THE CREATURE'S **COURSE** OVER THE LAST TWELVE HOURS...
...IT **WAS** HEADED DIRECTLY FOR JAPAN, BUT SINCE YOUR ENCOUNTER IT HAS CHANGED DIRECTION TO MATCH YOUR OWN SOUTHEASTERLY FLIGHT PATH.
THIS IS VERY ATYPICAL BEHAVIOR FOR A KAIJU, CURT. WHY FOLLOW YOU, WHEN YOU MUST BE OUT OF SIGHT BY NOW?
I'M TRANSMITTING OUR SENSOR LOG. RUN IT THROUGH THE SCIENCE SQUAD SUPER-COMPUTER.
OH, NO...
WHAT **TYPE** OF KAIJU IS KRAKOA?
YOU ARE NOT GOING TO **LIKE** THIS, CONNORS-SAN. THE CREATURE IS A CLASS-ONE GLOBAL ANTIGEN.
WHAT DOES **THAT** MEAN?
IT MEANS YOU PEOPLE HAVE **REALLY** MESSED UP OUR DAY.

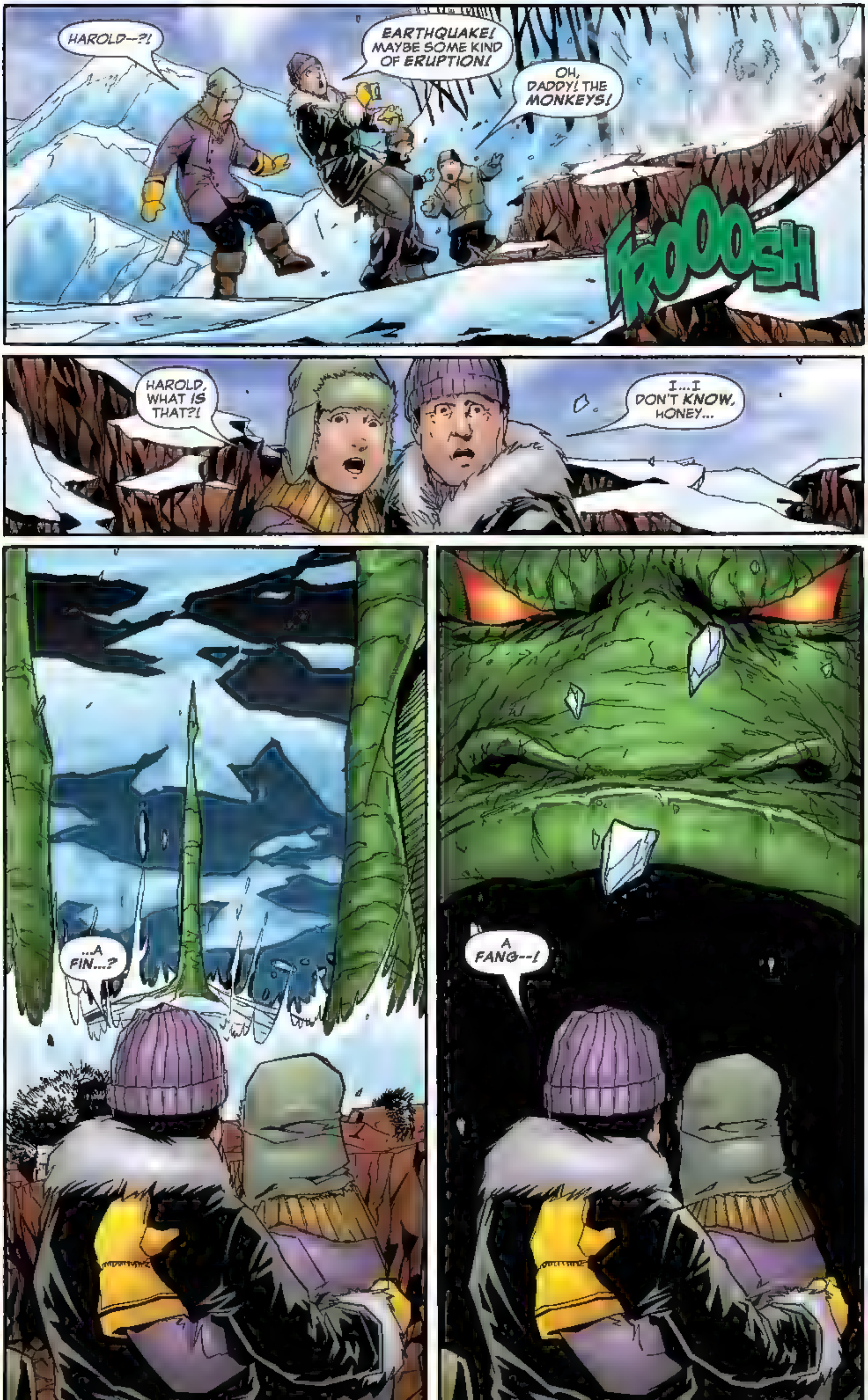

ANY PROGRESS WITH THE TEMPORAL FORECAST MODULES? I CAN'T SUGGEST A STRATEGY TILL I KNOW WHAT THIS KRAKOA MONSTER IS SUPPOSED TO DO.
PLEASE TO UNDERSTAND, EXILE-CASUALTY-FIVE, WE DID NOT INVENT PANOPTICHRON. WE CAN ONLY GUESS HOW TO REPAIR DAMAGE.
OUTSIDE TIME AND SPACE
EVERY-THING OKAY, HEATHER?
I DON'T THINK SO, STEPHEN.
BLINK'S TEAM IS OFF TO A ROCKY START, AND THEY HAVEN'T EVEN ASKED CONNORS TO HELP CAL YET.
MONSTER PLANET LOOKED LIKE A TROUBLED PLACE TO BEGIN WITH.
YEAH? WELL, WE MIGHT'VE JUST MADE THINGS WORSE THERE.
I HATE TO SAY I TOLD YOU SO--
THEN DON'T! I'M MAKING THE BEST OF A BAD SITUATION, AND I DON'T NEED TO BE HENPECKED.
NOT FUNNY.
SORRY. FREUDIAN SLIP.
IF I PAIN YOUR BUTT SO MUCH, SEND ME HOME LIKE I ASKED YOU TO!
=SIGH= I HAVE THE TIMEBREAKERS WORKING ON IT, BEAK, BUT WE'VE RUN INTO SOME PROBLEMS THERE, TOO...

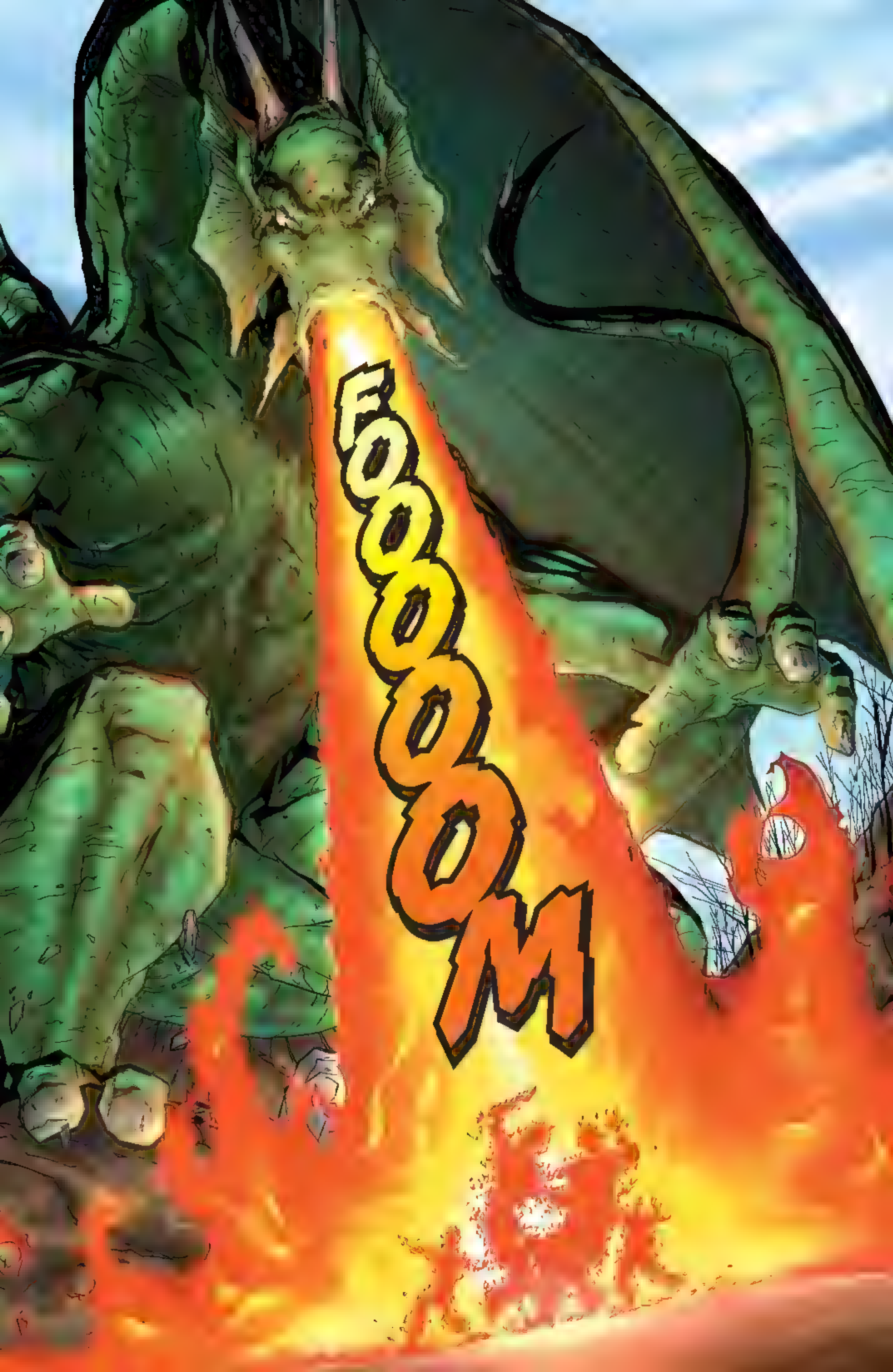

SHORTY! PUT EARTH SIX-ONE-SIX ON THE MAIN VIEWER.
SHORTY...?
THEY DON'T HAVE NAMES, SINCE THEY KNOW EACH OTHER BY SCENT, SO I HAVE TO CALL THEM SOMETHING.
WHAT IS 'EARTH SIX-ONE-SIX'?
IT'S HOW THEY LIST YOUR HOME-REALITY IN THEIR INDEX. BEAK. RIGHT NOW, BLINK IS ON THREE-SEVEN-FIVE-TWO.
THERE'S A LOT OF EARTHS OUT THERE.
APOLOGIES, EXILE-CASUALTY-FIVE WE ARE STILL UNABLE TO ACCESS REALITY SIX-ONE-SIX.
WH...IS THAT BECAUSE THINGS ARE BROKEN HERE? OR IS SOMETHING WRONG BACK HOME...?
EASY, BARNELL. I'M SURE THE GLITCH IS ON OUR END, AND WE'LL CLEAR IT UP SOON.
IF ANYTHING'S HAPPENED TO ANGEL AND OUR KIDS WHILE I WAS GONE...
THEY'RE FINE. LOOK, WE ALSO NEED TO REVERSE HOW THEY "UNHINGED" YOU FROM YOUR REALITY, OR NO ONE BACK HOME WILL EVEN KNOW YOU'RE THERE WHEN YOU GO BACK.
JUST BE PATIENT A LITTLE WHILE LONGER, AND WE'LL FIGURE IT ALL OUT.
WHILE YOU TWO DEAL WITH ALL THAT, I'D LIKE TO TAKE ANOTHER LOOK AT THE STASIS GALLERY, IF YOU DON'T MIND.
BE MY GUEST, STEPHEN. MAYBE WE CAN AUTOPSY ONE OF THE CADAVERS LATER?
THAT WOULD BE LOVELY, DOCTOR HUDSON.
UM...ABOUT THAT UNHINGING THING...?
IN A MINUTE, IN A MINUTE...

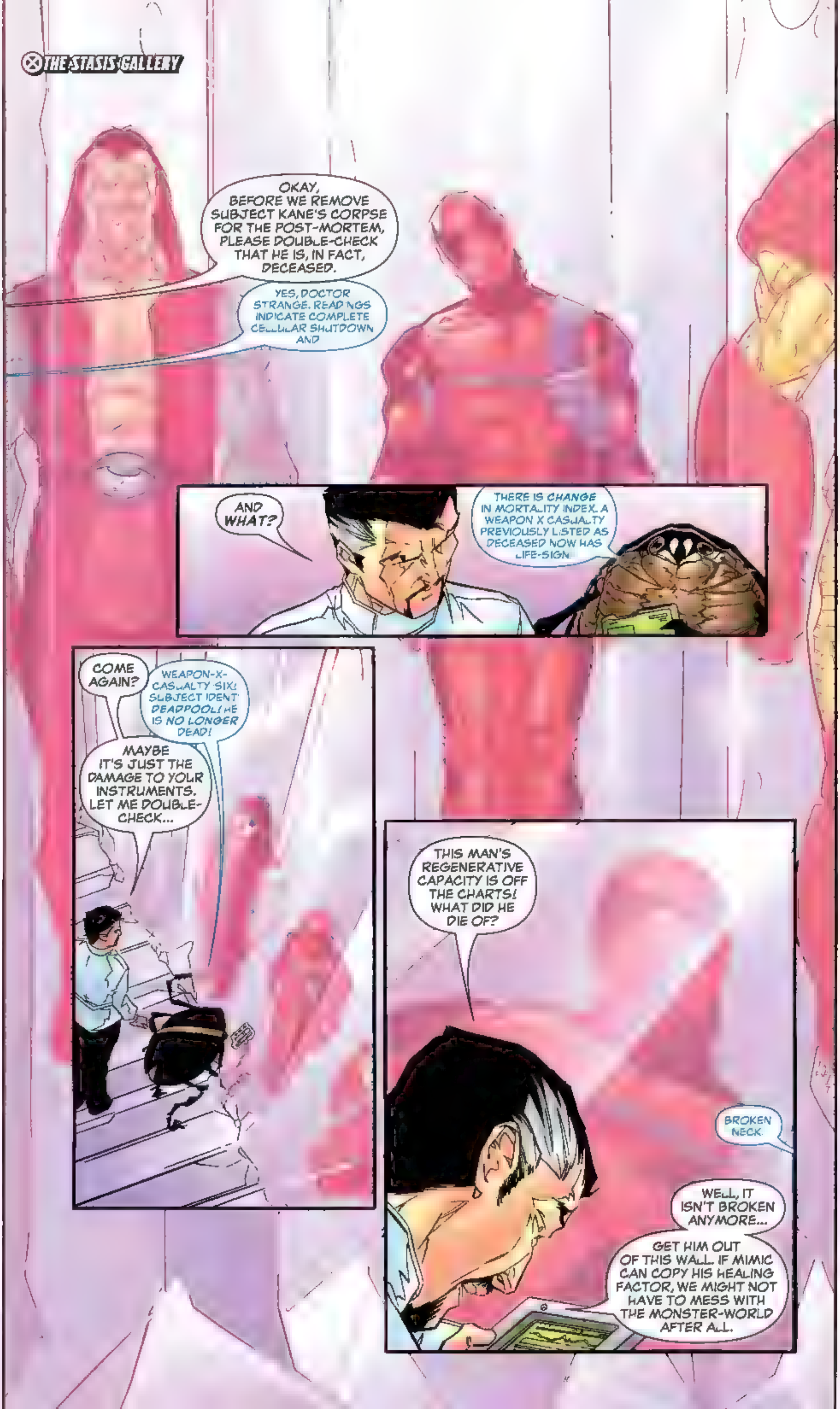

EARTH #3752
I'D BE GLAD TO HEAL YOUR INJURED FRIEND, IF ONLY TO PROVE YOU REALLY ARE FROM SOME "OTHER EARTH" LIKE YOU CLAIM...
...BUT FIRST YOU HELP FIX THE MESS YOU MADE HERE.
FINE, DOCTOR CONNORS. HOW ABOUT YOU DROP THE ATTITUDE AND EXPLAIN WHAT'S THE DEAL WITH THAT MONSTER?
OKAY, OKAY. LET ME START FROM THE VERY BEGINNING...
KLIK
THIS WAS THE FIRST GLOBAL ANTIGEN WE EVER ENCOUNTERED.
IT DIDN'T SPEAK OR HAVE A NAME. IT JUST CAME UP FROM THE EARTH'S CORE AND SMASHED AN EXPERIMENTAL GEOTHERMAL ENERGY FACILITY BEFORE WE COULD STOP IT.
WE FOUND OUT LATER THAT THE FACILITY IT ATTACKED WOULD HAVE COLLAPSED THE TECTONIC STRUCTURE OF EARTH'S CRUST.
THAT NAMELESS KAIJU SAVED THE WORLD! BUT IT WAS ONLY THE FIRST OF MANY KAIJU TO APPEAR IN THE LAST TEN YEARS.
WE'VE COME TO REALIZE THAT THERE ARE TWO TYPES OF KAIJU: ANTIGENIC AND PATHOGENIC--
WHOA, WHOA, SLOW DOWN A MINUTE.
START BY TELLING US WHAT THE HECK A "KAIJU" IS!
STOP
CROSSING GUARD

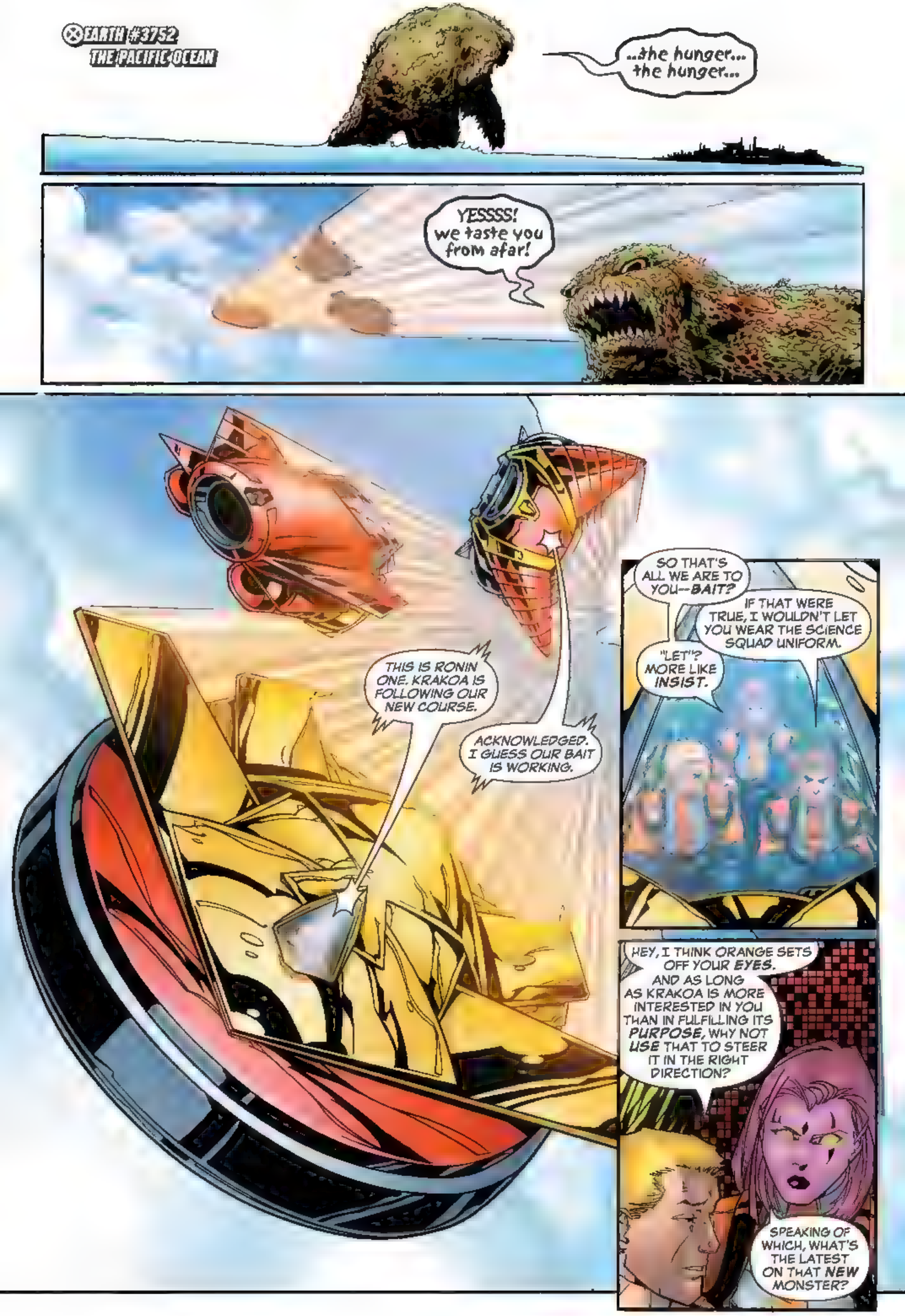

YOU KNOW-- A KAIJU. A GIANT MONSTER!
WHY NOT JUST CALL IT A GIANT MONSTER?
WHY CALL A GIANT WAVE A TSUNAMI?
OR A GIANT IDIOT A "MORPH"? CAN WE STICK TO THE POINT?
THE POINT IS THAT THESE GIANT MONSTERS WE FIGHT ARE A NATURAL PHENOMENON.
THE PATHOGENIC ONES ARE A CANCER ON THE ENVIRONMENT THAT MUST BE DESTROYED.
KLIK
BUT THE ONES WE LABEL AS ANTIGENIC ARE THE EARTH'S BIOSPHERE CREATING A RESPONSE TO A THREAT, THE WAY YOUR IMMUNE SYSTEM MIGHT CREATE ANTIBODIES.
SOMETIMES THE THREAT IS MAN-MADE, AND SOMETIMES THE THREAT IS ANOTHER KAIJU.
AND, WHAT? YOU JUST LET THE "GOOD" MONSTERS STOMP ON WHATEVER GETS IN THEIR WAY?
ESSENTIALLY, YES.
OH, WE EVACUATE CIVILIANS AND TRY TO STEER THESE BEASTS TO MINIMIZE DAMAGE, BUT THE TRUTH IS THAT THEY HAVE TO RUN THEIR COURSE.
GOOD KAIJU ARE LIKE...A WILDFIRE THAT ENDS UP RENEWING THE FOREST.
OR LIKE BAD-TASTING MEDICINE--YOU MAY NOT LIKE IT GOING DOWN, BUT IT'LL STILL SAVE YOU FROM SOMETHING EVEN WORSE.
MAYBE. I HAVE SCANNED THE ARCHIPELAGO FOR ANOMALIES SINCE YOU RETURNED TO BASE, BUT I FIND NOTHING OUT OF THE ORDINARY YET...
YOU GUYS SAID EARLIER THAT KRAKOA WAS HEADED FOR JAPAN. DOES THIS MEAN A BAD MONSTER WILL SHOW UP THERE?

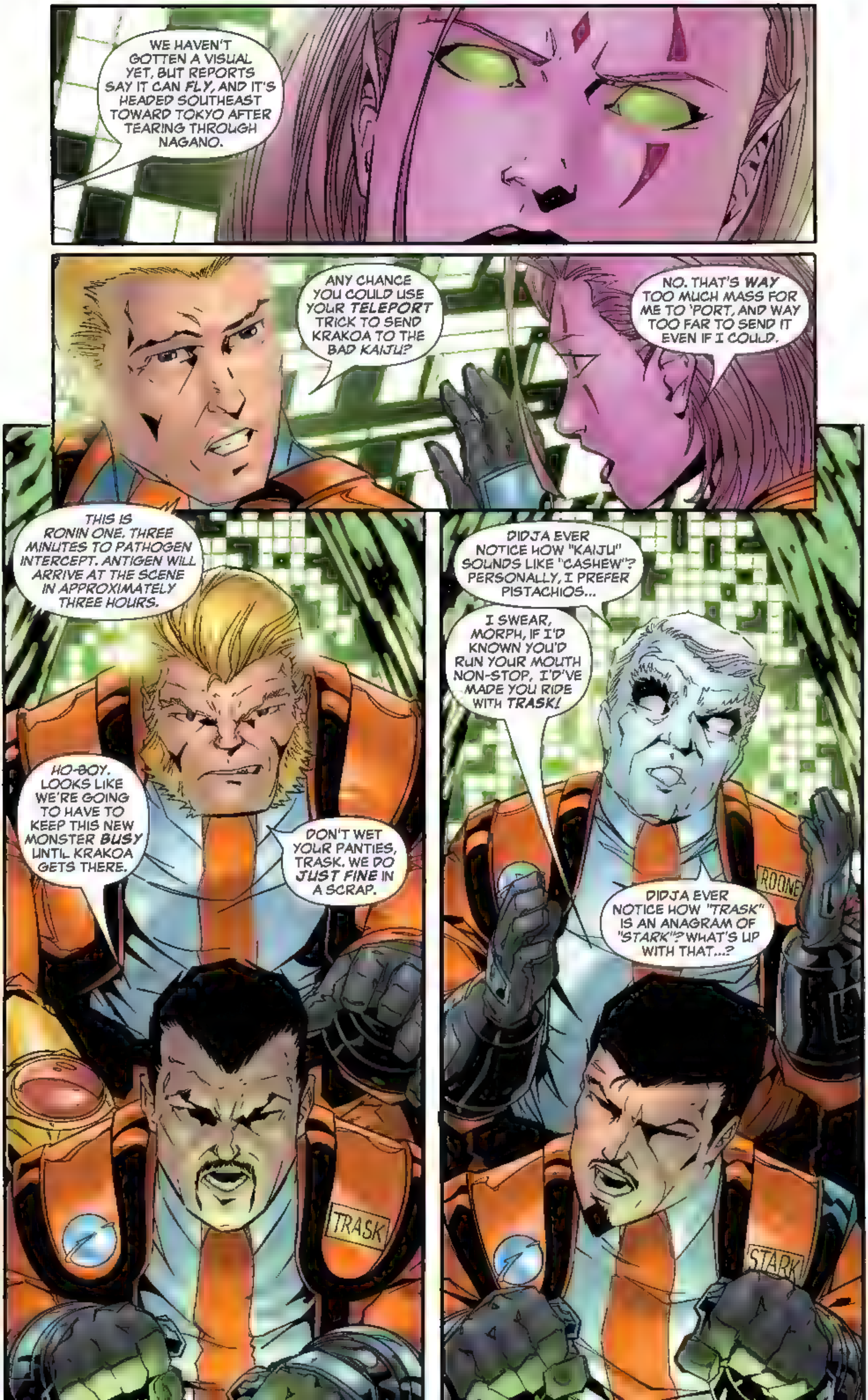

"...UNFORTUNATELY, OUR FIRST INDICATION OF THE PATHOGENIC BEAST MAY COME AS A CRY FOR HELP."
SAY 'CHEETOES"!
JIGOKUDANI WILD MONKEY PARK
NAGANO PREFECTURE, JAPAN
IT SAYS HERE THAT THE MONKEYS ONLY STARTED BATHING IN THE HOT SPRINGS ABOUT FORTY YEARS AGO...
WHY DOESN'T IT COOK THEM?
=HEH= KIDS, THAT WATER LOOKS HOTTER THAN IT IS BECAUSE THE AIR'S SO COLD UP HERE. IT MIGHT STEAM A LOT, BUT IT'S REALLY LIKE A NICE, WARM BATH IN THERE.
WHAT MAKES THE WATER WARM, DADDY?
OH, JAPAN IS VERY GEOLOGICALLY ACTIVE...
"...THERE'RE POWERFUL FORCES LURKING UNDER THE GROUND HERE THAT CAN--"
"LORD HAVE MERCY!"

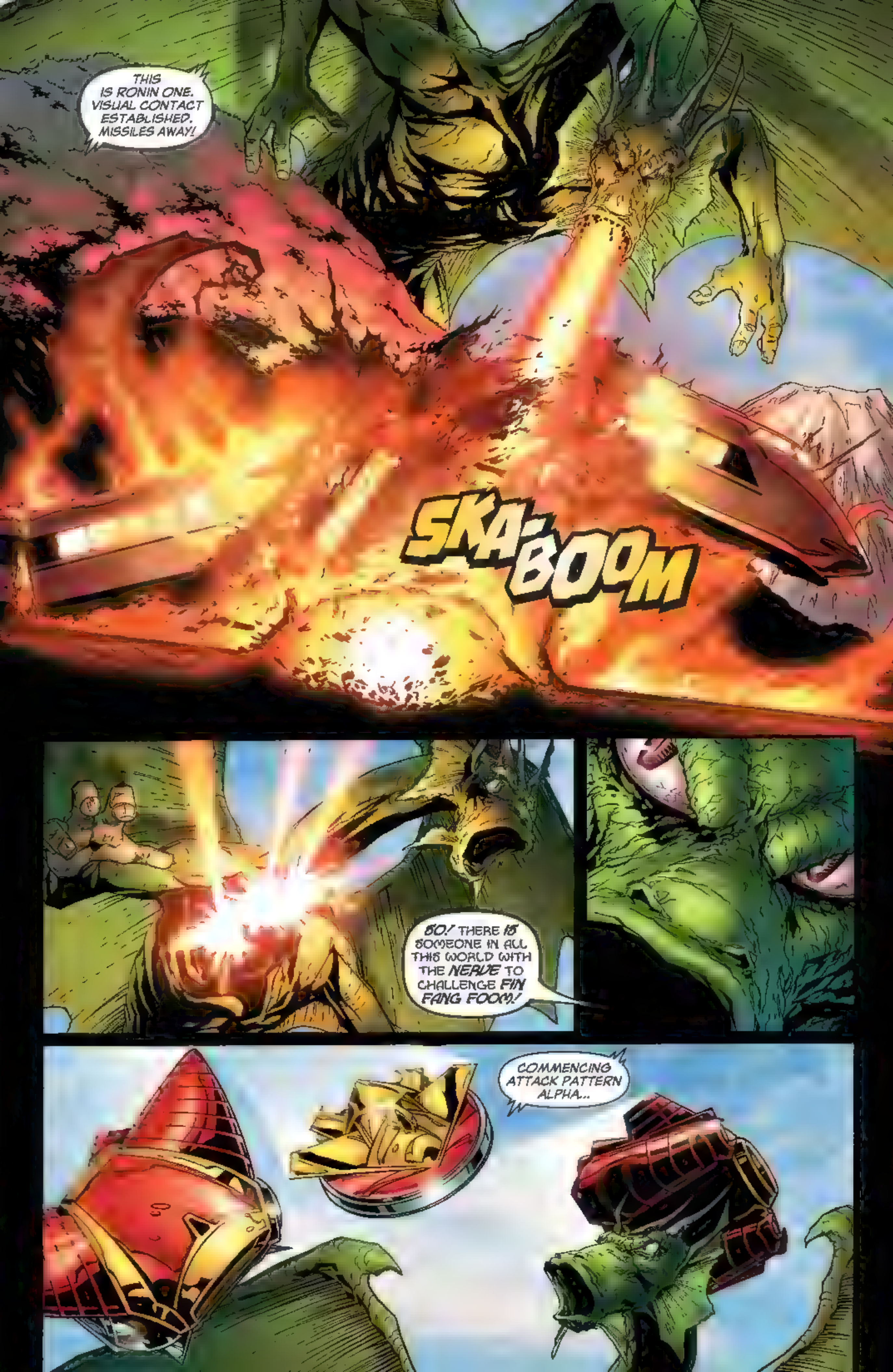

HAROLD--?!
EARTHQUAKE! MAYBE SOME KIND OF ERUPTION!
OH, DADDY! THE MONKEYS!
FROOOOSH
HAROLD, WHAT IS THAT?!
I...I DON'T KNOW, HONEY...
...A FIN...?
A FANG--!

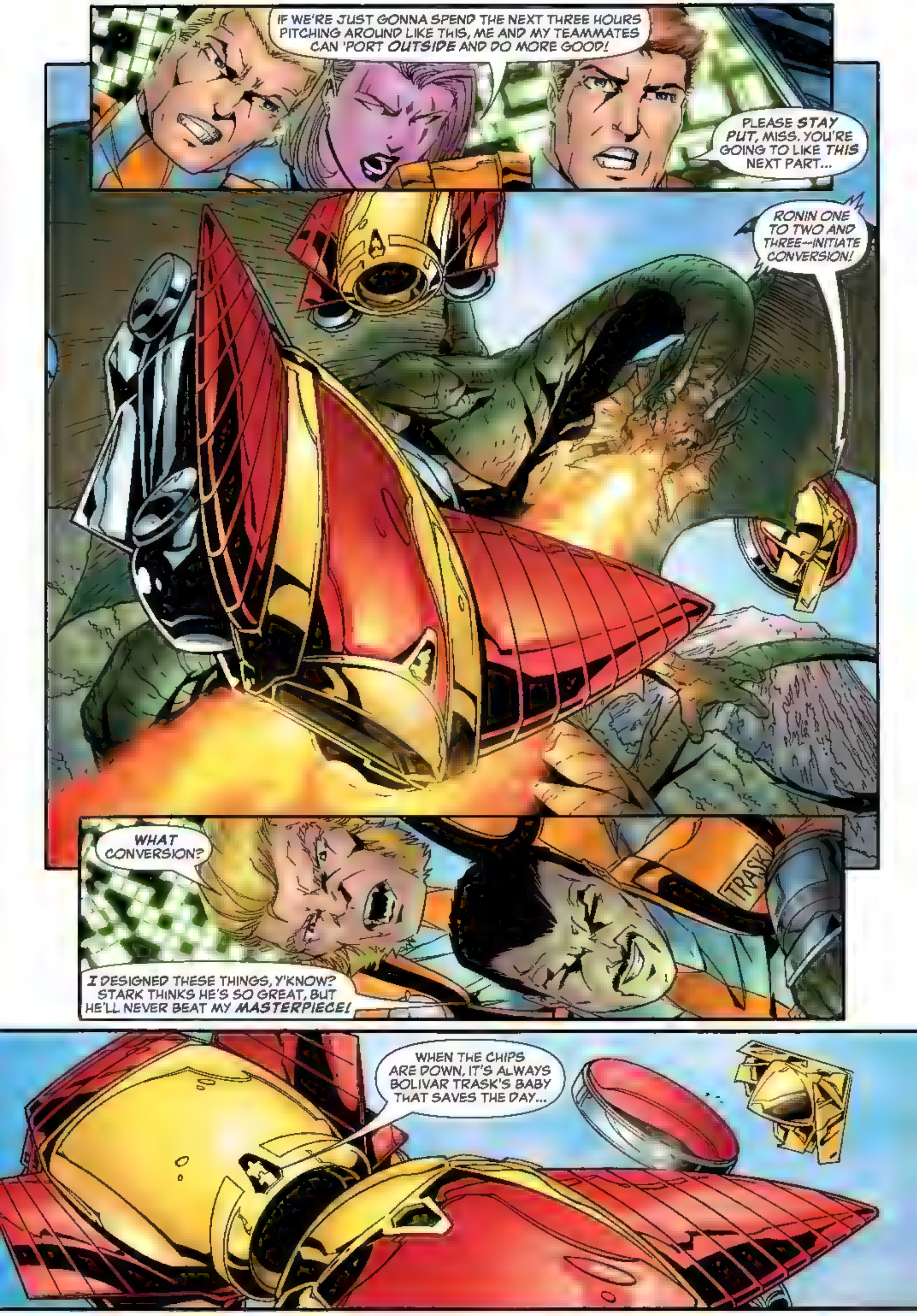

FOOOOOOM

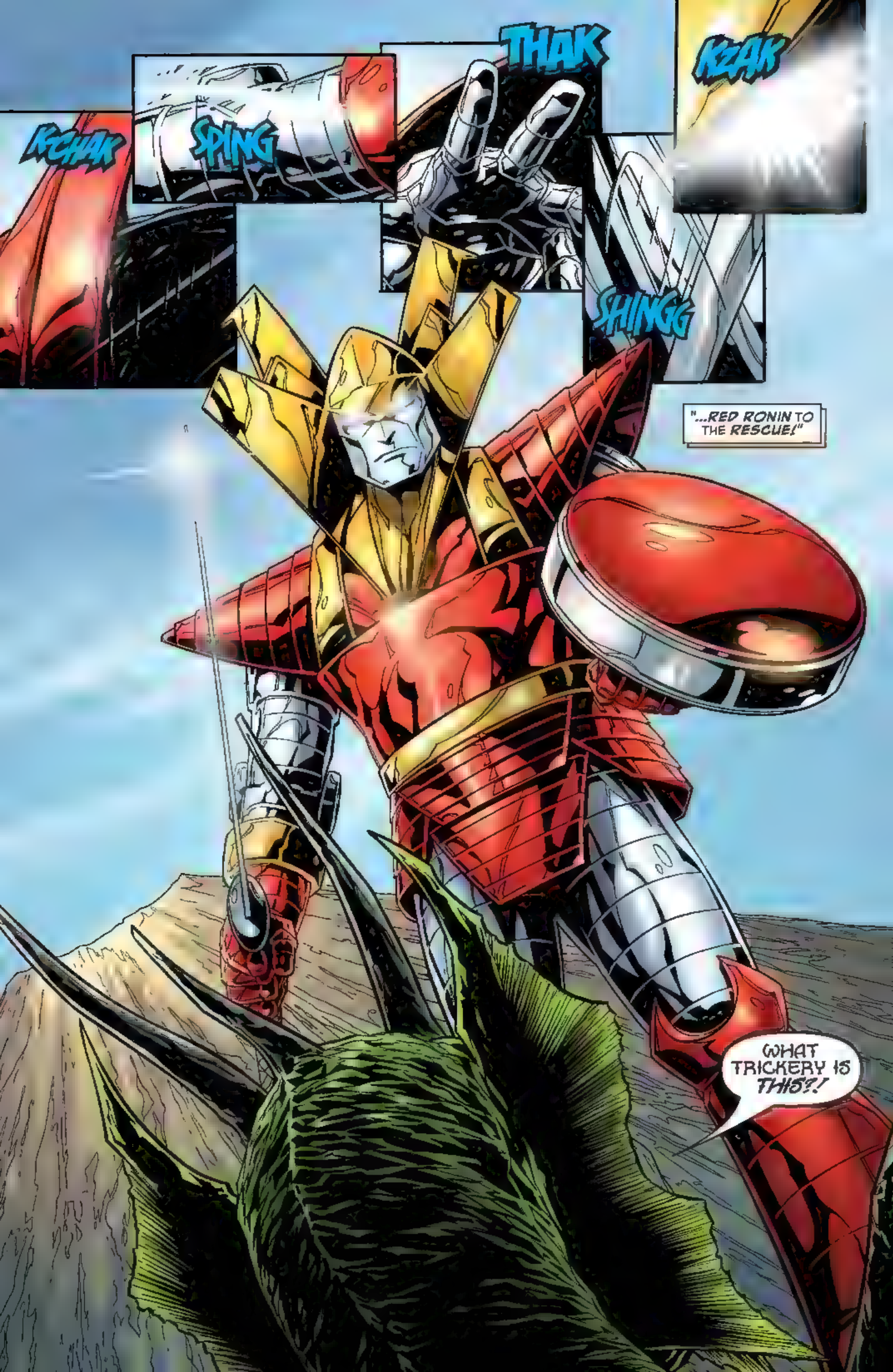

THE STASIS GALLERY
OKAY, BEFORE WE REMOVE SUBJECT KANE'S CORPSE FOR THE POST-MORTEM, PLEASE DOUBLE-CHECK THAT HE IS, IN FACT, DECEASED.
YES, DOCTOR STRANGE. READINGS INDICATE COMPLETE CELLULAR SHUTDOWN AND
AND WHAT?
THERE IS CHANGE IN MORTALITY INDEX. A WEAPON X CASUALTY PREVIOUSLY LISTED AS DECEASED NOW HAS LIFE-SIGN.
COME AGAIN?
WEAPON-X-CASUALTY SIX! SUBJECT IDENT DEADPOOL! HE IS NO LONGER DEAD!
MAYBE IT'S JUST THE DAMAGE TO YOUR INSTRUMENTS. LET ME DOUBLE-CHECK...
THIS MAN'S REGENERATIVE CAPACITY IS OFF THE CHARTS! WHAT DID HE DIE OF?
BROKEN NECK.
WELL, IT ISN'T BROKEN ANYMORE...
GET HIM OUT OF THIS WALL. IF MIMIC CAN COPY HIS HEALING FACTOR, WE MIGHT NOT HAVE TO MESS WITH THE MONSTER-WORLD AFTER ALL.

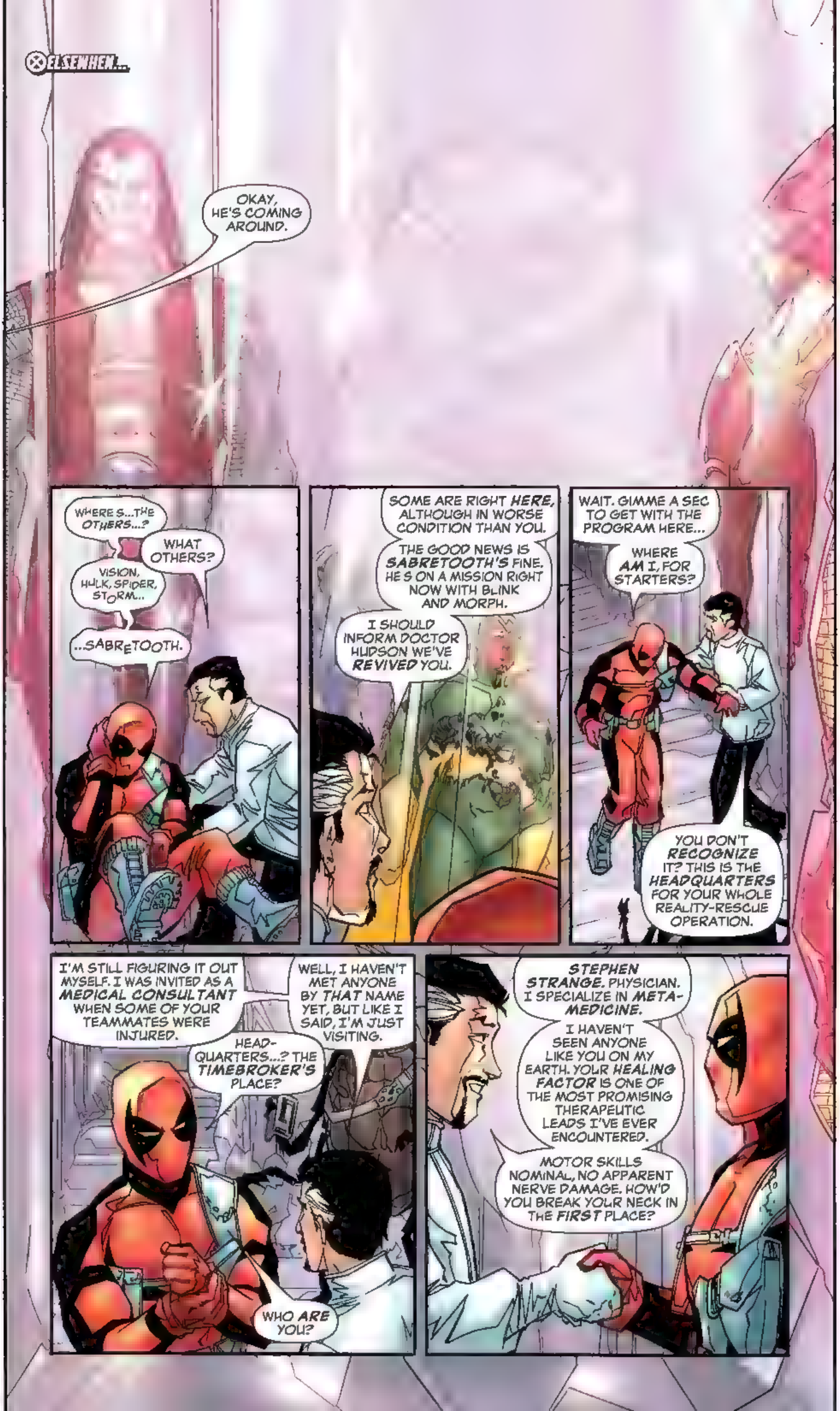

EARTH #3752
THE PACIFIC OCEAN
...the hunger... the hunger...
YESSSS! we taste you from afar!
THIS IS RONIN ONE. KRAKOA IS FOLLOWING OUR NEW COURSE.
ACKNOWLEDGED. I GUESS OUR BAIT IS WORKING.
SO THAT'S ALL WE ARE TO YOU--BAIT?
IF THAT WERE TRUE, I WOULDN'T LET YOU WEAR THE SCIENCE SQUAD UNIFORM.
"LET"? MORE LIKE INSIST.
HEY, I THINK ORANGE SETS OFF YOUR EYES.
AND AS LONG AS KRAKOA IS MORE INTERESTED IN YOU THAN IN FULFILLING ITS PURPOSE, WHY NOT USE THAT TO STEER IT IN THE RIGHT DIRECTION?
SPEAKING OF WHICH, WHAT'S THE LATEST ON THAT NEW MONSTER?

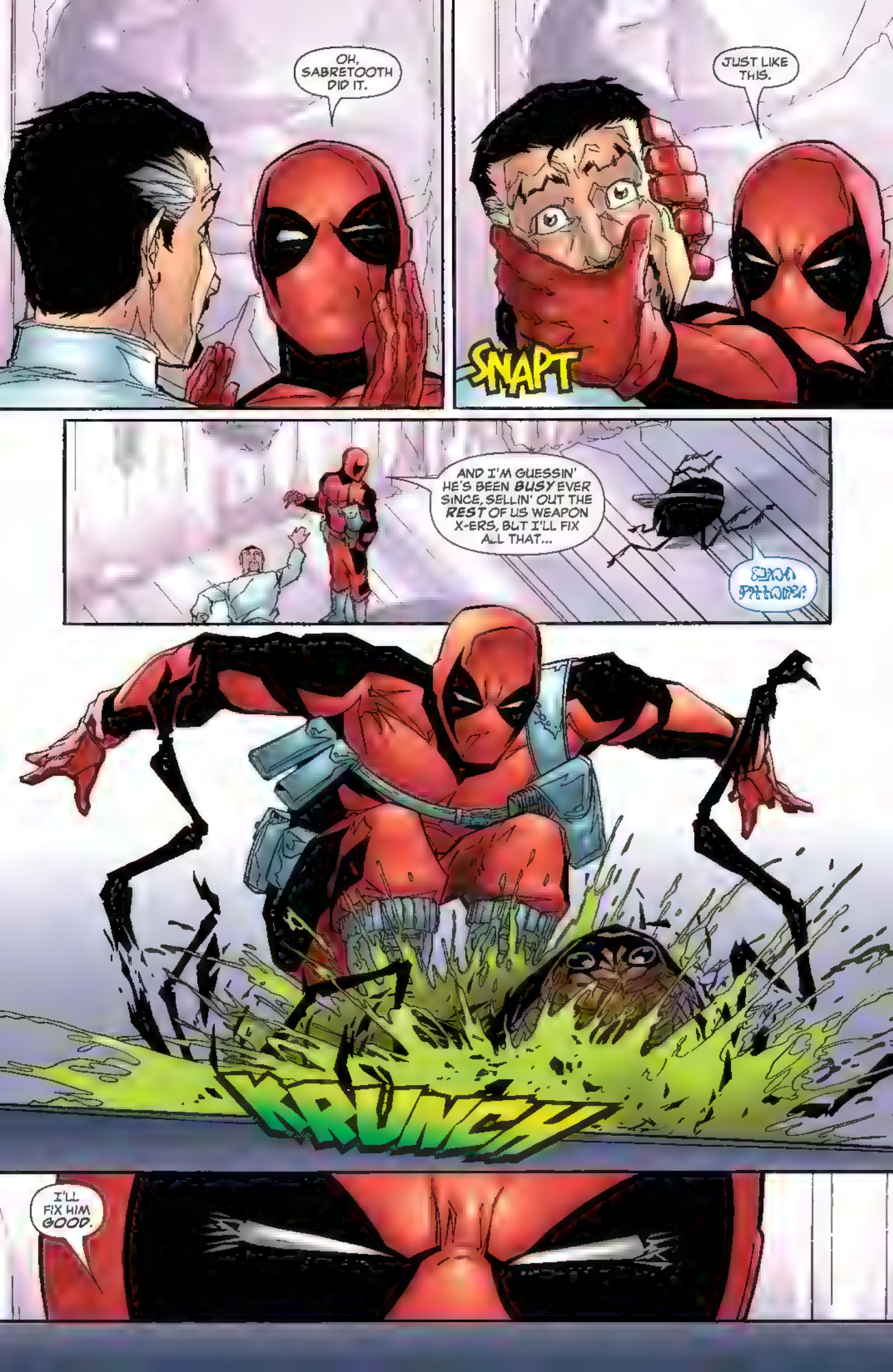

WE HAVEN'T GOTTEN A VISUAL YET, BUT REPORTS SAY IT CAN FLY, AND IT'S HEADED SOUTHEAST TOWARD TOKYO AFTER TEARING THROUGH NAGANO.
ANY CHANCE YOU COULD USE YOUR TELEPORT TRICK TO SEND KRAKOA TO THE BAD KAIJU?
NO. THAT'S WAY TOO MUCH MASS FOR ME TO 'PORT, AND WAY TOO FAR TO SEND IT EVEN IF I COULD.
THIS IS RONIN ONE. THREE MINUTES TO PATHOGEN INTERCEPT. ANTIGEN WILL ARRIVE AT THE SCENE IN APPROXIMATELY THREE HOURS.
HO-BOY. LOOKS LIKE WE'RE GOING TO HAVE TO KEEP THIS NEW MONSTER BUSY UNTIL KRAKOA GETS THERE.
DON'T WET YOUR PANTIES, TRASK. WE DO JUST FINE IN A SCRAP.
TRASK
DIDJA EVER NOTICE HOW "KAIJU" SOUNDS LIKE "CASHEW"? PERSONALLY, I PREFER PISTACHIOS...
I SWEAR, MORPH, IF I'D KNOWN YOU'D RUN YOUR MOUTH NON-STOP, I'D'VE MADE YOU RIDE WITH TRASK!
DIDJA EVER NOTICE HOW "TRASK" IS AN ANAGRAM OF "STARK"? WHAT'S UP WITH THAT...?
STARK


THIS IS RONIN ONE. VISUAL CONTACT ESTABLISHED. MISSILES AWAY!
SKA-BOOM
SO! THERE IS SOMEONE IN ALL THIS WORLD WITH THE NERVE TO CHALLENGE FIN FANG FOOM!
COMMENCING ATTACK PATTERN ALPHA...


IF WE'RE JUST GONNA SPEND THE NEXT THREE HOURS PITCHING AROUND LIKE THIS, ME AND MY TEAMMATES CAN 'PORT OUTSIDE AND DO MORE GOOD!
PLEASE STAY PUT, MISS. YOU'RE GOING TO LIKE THIS NEXT PART...
RONIN ONE TO TWO AND THREE--INITIATE CONVERSION!
WHAT CONVERSION?
I DESIGNED THESE THINGS, Y'KNOW? STARK THINKS HE'S SO GREAT, BUT HE'LL NEVER BEAT MY MASTERPIECE!
TRASK
WHEN THE CHIPS ARE DOWN, IT'S ALWAYS BOLIVAR TRASK'S BABY THAT SAVES THE DAY...


K-CHAK
SPING
THAK
KZAK
SHINGG
"...RED RONIN TO THE *RESCUE!*"
WHAT TRICKERY IS *THIS?!*


ELSEWHEN...
OKAY, HE'S COMING AROUND.
WHERE'S...THE OTHERS...?
WHAT OTHERS?
VISION, HULK, SPIDER, STORM...
...SABRETOOTH.
SOME ARE RIGHT HERE, ALTHOUGH IN WORSE CONDITION THAN YOU.
THE GOOD NEWS IS SABRETOOTH'S FINE. HE'S ON A MISSION RIGHT NOW WITH BLINK AND MORPH.
I SHOULD INFORM DOCTOR HUDSON WE'VE REVIVED YOU.
WAIT. GIMME A SEC TO GET WITH THE PROGRAM HERE...
WHERE AM I, FOR STARTERS?
YOU DON'T RECOGNIZE IT? THIS IS THE HEADQUARTERS FOR YOUR WHOLE REALITY-RESCUE OPERATION.
HEAD-QUARTERS...? THE TIMEBROKER'S PLACE?
WELL, I HAVEN'T MET ANYONE BY THAT NAME YET, BUT LIKE I SAID, I'M JUST VISITING.
I'M STILL FIGURING IT OUT MYSELF. I WAS INVITED AS A MEDICAL CONSULTANT WHEN SOME OF YOUR TEAMMATES WERE INJURED.
WHO ARE YOU?
STEPHEN STRANGE. PHYSICIAN. I SPECIALIZE IN META-MEDICINE.
I HAVEN'T SEEN ANYONE LIKE YOU ON MY EARTH. YOUR HEALING FACTOR IS ONE OF THE MOST PROMISING THERAPEUTIC LEADS I'VE EVER ENCOUNTERED.
MOTOR SKILLS NOMINAL, NO APPARENT NERVE DAMAGE. HOW'D YOU BREAK YOUR NECK IN THE FIRST PLACE?


OH, SABRETOOTH DID IT.
JUST LIKE THIS.
SNAPT
AND I'M GUESSIN' HE'S BEEN BUSY EVER SINCE, SELLIN' OUT THE REST OF US WEAPON X-ERS, BUT I'LL FIX ALL THAT...
KRUNCH
I'LL FIX HIM GOOD.

MARVEL
68
BEDARD
CALAFIORE
MCKENNA
EXILES™
C. Calafiore & McKenna '05

Parallel universes. Alternate realities. Some are like the world we know, others completely different. And a few tragic realities are damaged, twisted and downright dangerous. That's where you'll find the EXILES—a team of mutants who repair the broken links in the chains of Time, restoring the cosmic balance.

EXILES

PREVIOUSLY

Plucked from their own separate realities, BLINK, SABRETOOTH, MIMIC, MORPH, HEATHER HUDSON and BEAK were instructed to travel from one doomed version of Earth to the next, saving each world from its own disastrous flaws. Only if they completed their impossible missions would the mysterious TIMEBROKER return them to their former lives.

Unfortunately, it was all a lie.

The Exiles traveled to the Timebroker's seat of power, an extra-dimensional observatory carved entirely from energized crystal. Once there, they found no Timebroker at all. Instead, alien scientists operated the "Crystal Palace," hiding behind the Timebroker façade. Even worse, the evil HYPERION from the Exiles' ruthless sister team, WEAPON X, had taken over the Crystal Palace.

Hyperion was defeated, but the battle grievously injured Mimic and damaged much of the Crystal Palace's delicate instruments. To save Mimic's life, the Exiles recruited a meta-human medical expert, DR. STEVEN STRANGE. On his recommendation, Blink, Sabretooth and Morph have traveled to a reality plagued by giant creatures, seeking the help of DR. CURT CONNORS and his monster-fighting SCIENCE SQUAD. Connors' regenerative serum may be Mimic's only hope to survive, but to get it, Blink's team must help the Squad arrange a battle between two giant beasts—FIN FANG FOOM and KRAKOA. The Science Squad now battles Fin Fang Foom inside their giant robot warrior, RED RONIN, trying to stall the dragon until Krakoa arrives.

However, things have taken a nasty turn back at the Crystal Palace, as Dr. Strange revived former Weapon X member, DEADPOOL, not realizing this act of kindness would cost Dr. Strange his life. Now Deadpool roams the Crystal Palace, seeking revenge against Sabretooth for once betraying the Weapon X team.

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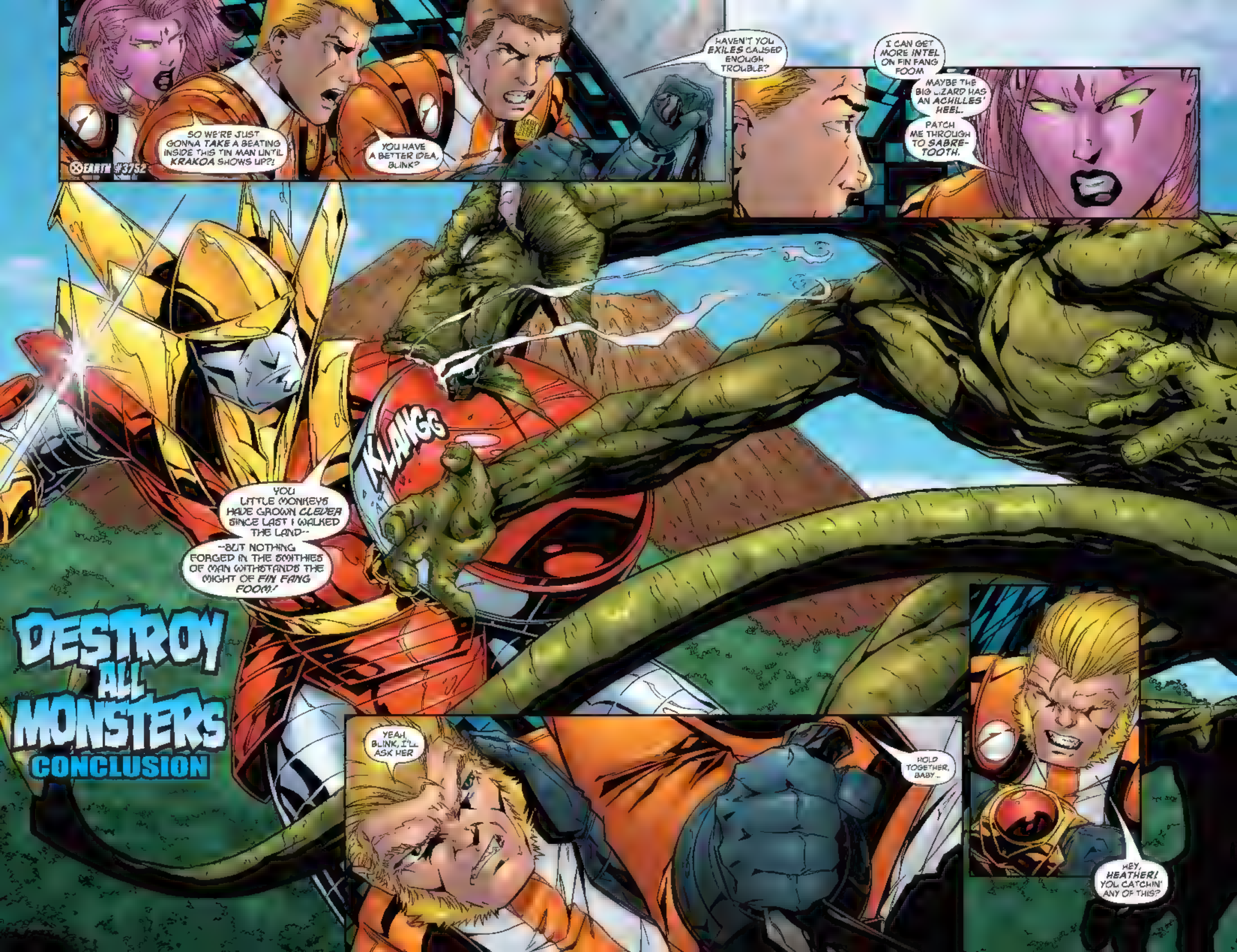
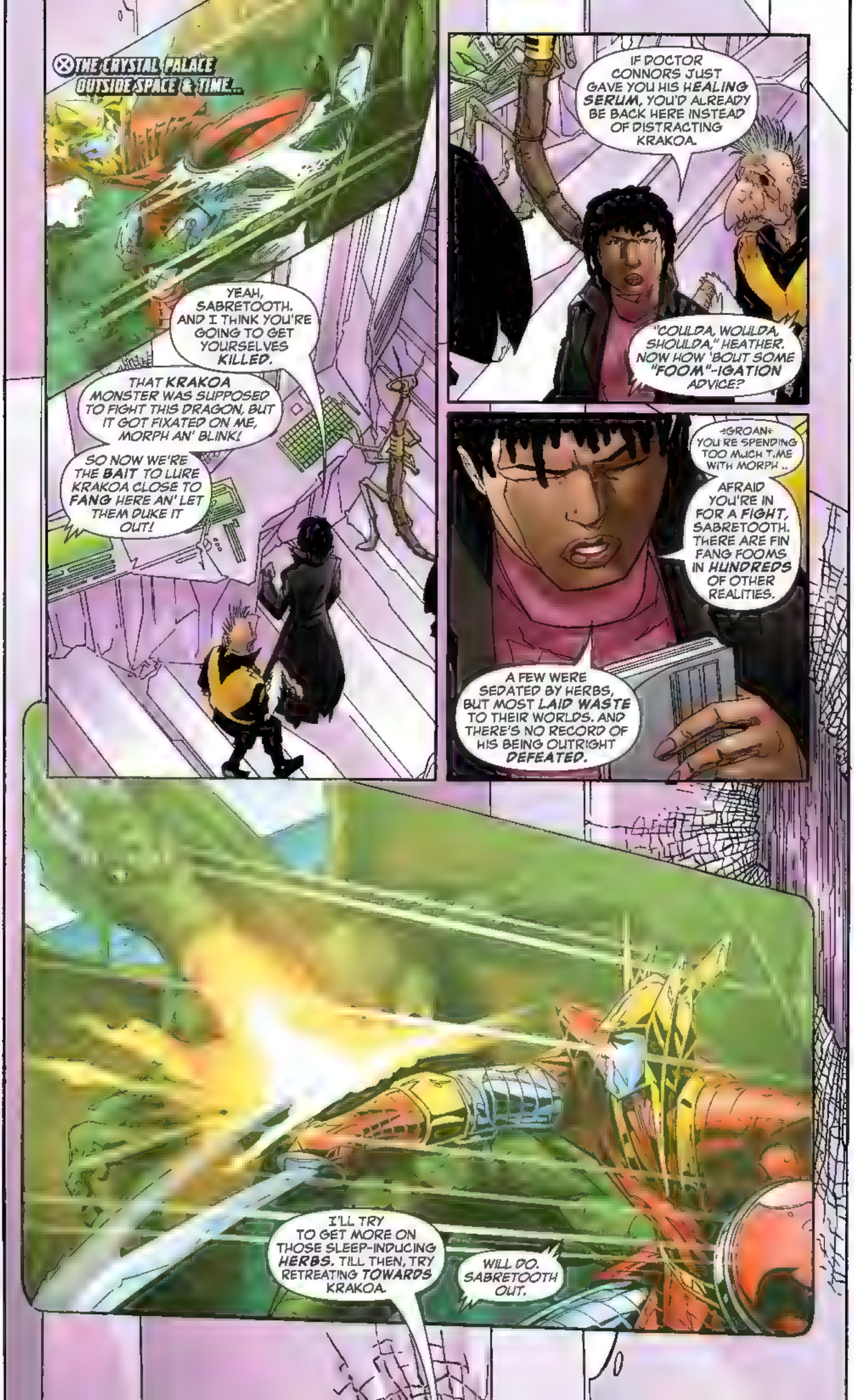
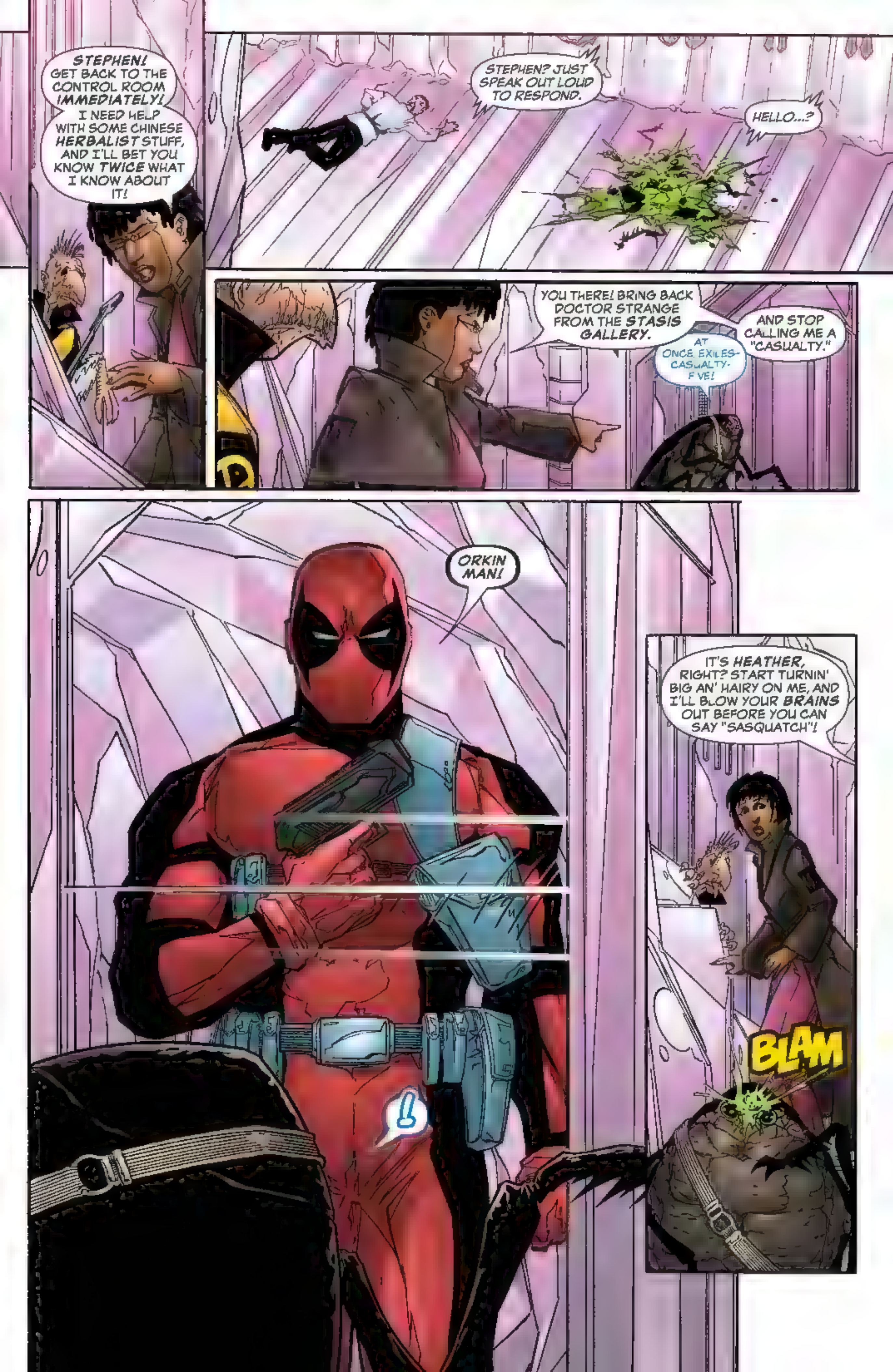
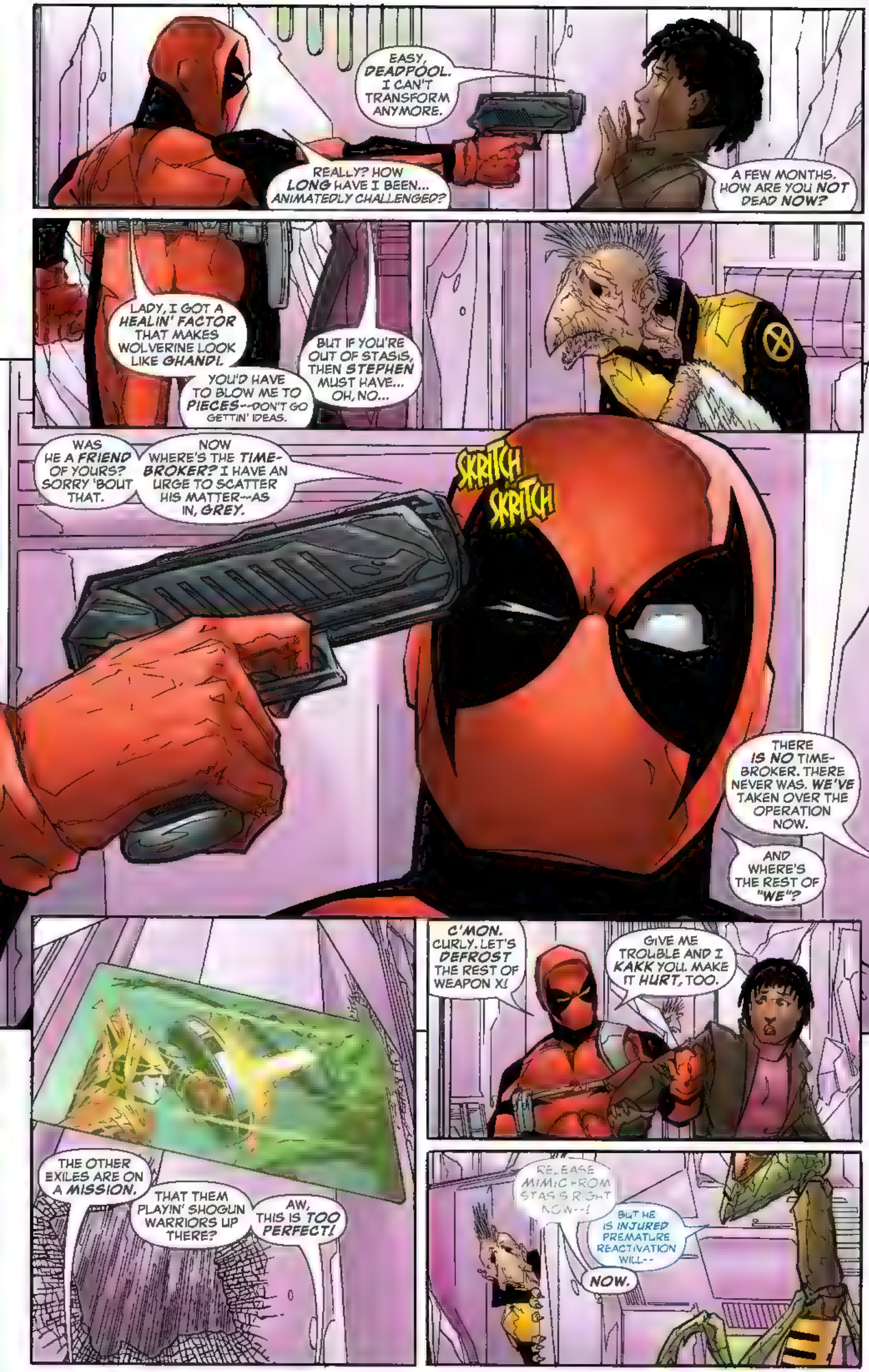
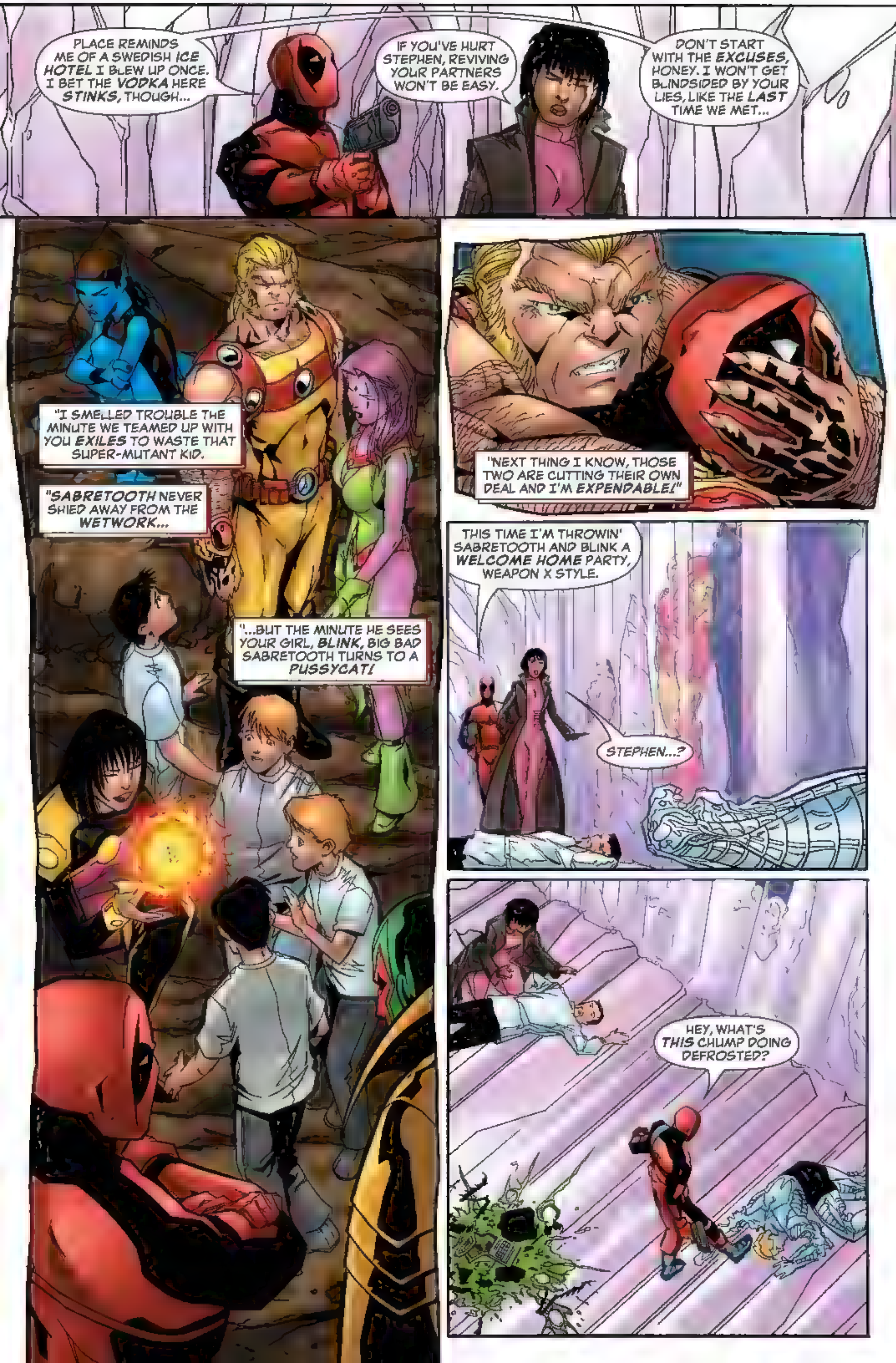
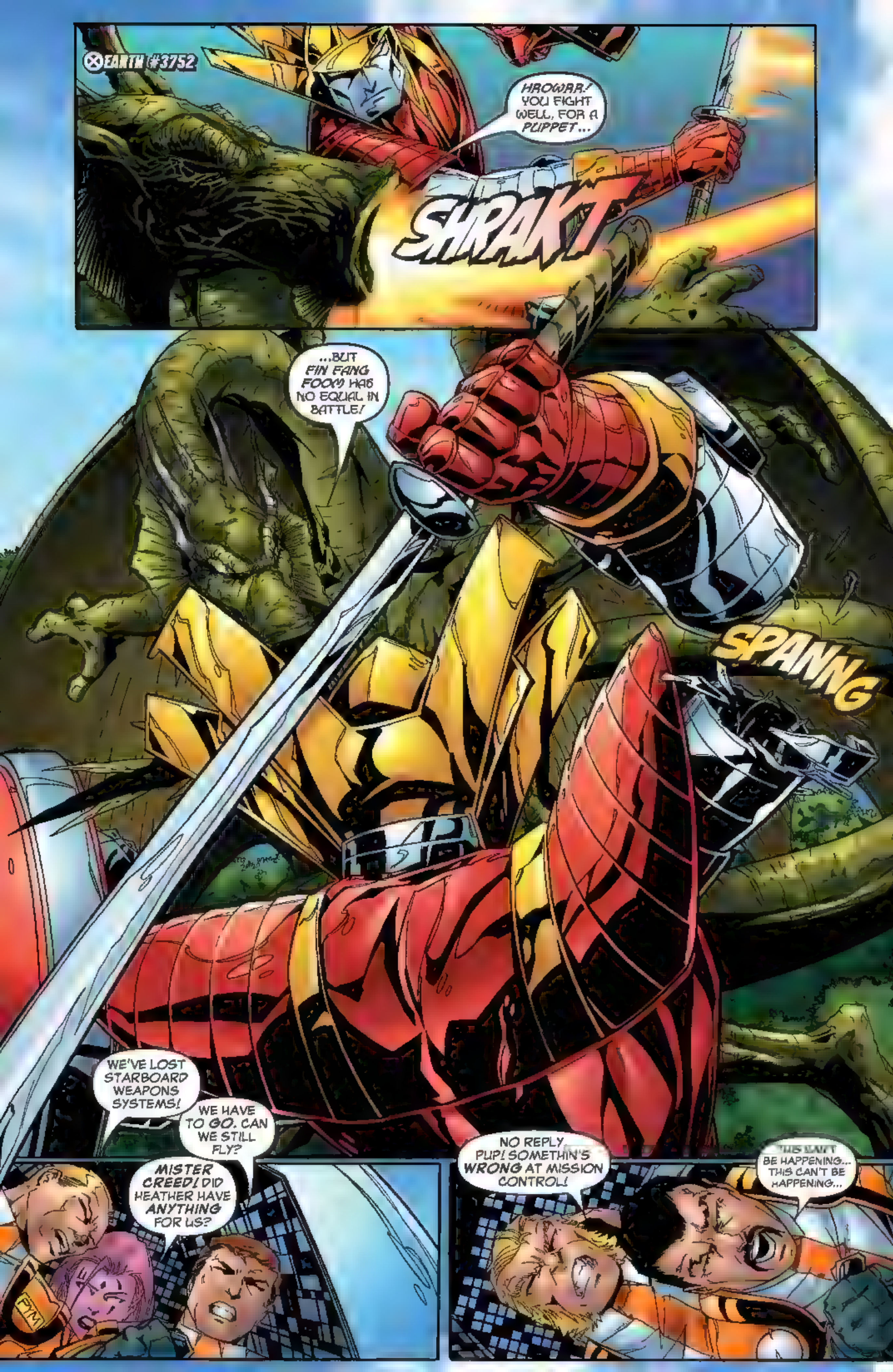

EARTH #3752
SO WE'RE JUST GONNA *TAKE* A BEATING INSIDE THIS TIN MAN UNTIL *KRAKOA* SHOWS UP?!
YOU HAVE A BETTER IDEA, BLINK?
HAVEN'T YOU *EXILES* CAUSED ENOUGH TROUBLE?
I CAN GET MORE *INTEL* ON FIN FANG FOOM
MAYBE THE BIG LIZARD HAS AN *ACHILLES' HEEL.*
PATCH ME THROUGH TO *SABRETOOTH.*
KLANGG
YOU LITTLE MONKEYS HAVE GROWN *CLEVER* SINCE LAST I WALKED THE LAND--
--BUT NOTHING FORGED IN THE SMITHIES OF MAN WITHSTANDS THE MIGHT OF *FIN FANG FOOM!*
DESTROY ALL MONSTERS
CONCLUSION
YEAH, BLINK, I'LL ASK HER
HOLD TOGETHER, BABY...
HEY, *HEATHER!* YOU CATCHIN' ANY OF THIS?

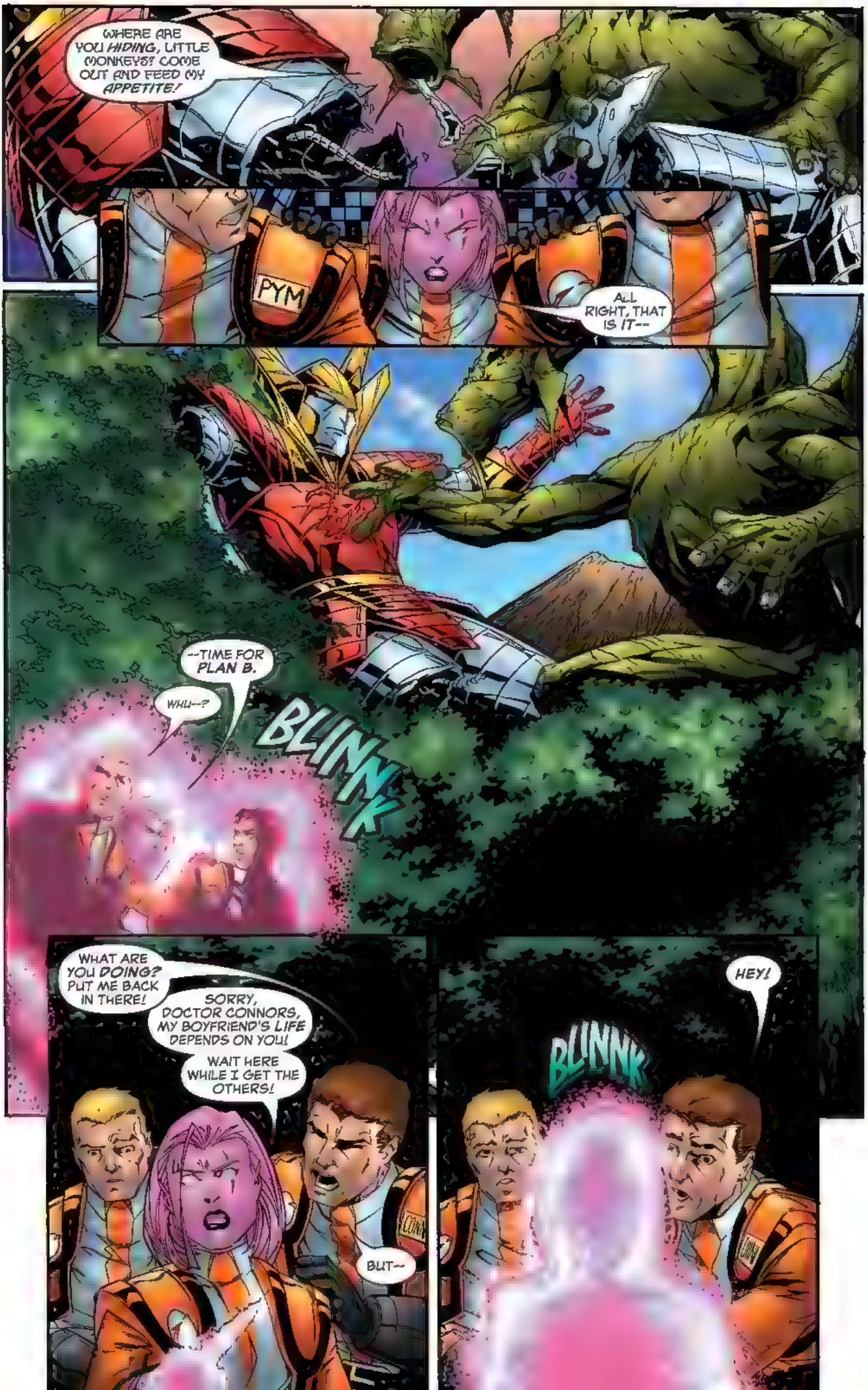

THE CRYSTAL PALACE OUTSIDE SPACE & TIME...
YEAH, SABRETOOTH. AND I THINK YOU'RE GOING TO GET YOURSELVES **KILLED**.
THAT **KRAKOA** MONSTER WAS SUPPOSED TO FIGHT THIS DRAGON, BUT IT GOT FIXATED ON ME, MORPH AN' BLINK!
SO NOW WE'RE THE **BAIT** TO LURE KRAKOA CLOSE TO **FANG** HERE AN' LET THEM DUKE IT OUT!
IF DOCTOR CONNORS JUST GAVE YOU HIS **HEALING SERUM**, YOU'D ALREADY BE BACK HERE INSTEAD OF DISTRACTING KRAKOA.
"COULDA, WOULDA, SHOULDA," HEATHER. NOW HOW 'BOUT SOME **"FOOM"-IGATION** ADVICE?
GROAN YOU'RE SPENDING TOO MUCH TIME WITH MORPH..
AFRAID YOU'RE IN FOR A **FIGHT**, SABRETOOTH. THERE ARE FIN FANG FOOMS IN **HUNDREDS** OF OTHER REALITIES.
A FEW WERE SEDATED BY HERBS, BUT MOST **LAID WASTE** TO THEIR WORLDS. AND THERE'S NO RECORD OF HIS BEING OUTRIGHT **DEFEATED**.
I'LL TRY TO GET MORE ON THOSE SLEEP-INDUCING **HERBS**. TILL THEN, TRY RETREATING **TOWARDS** KRAKOA.
WILL DO. SABRETOOTH OUT.

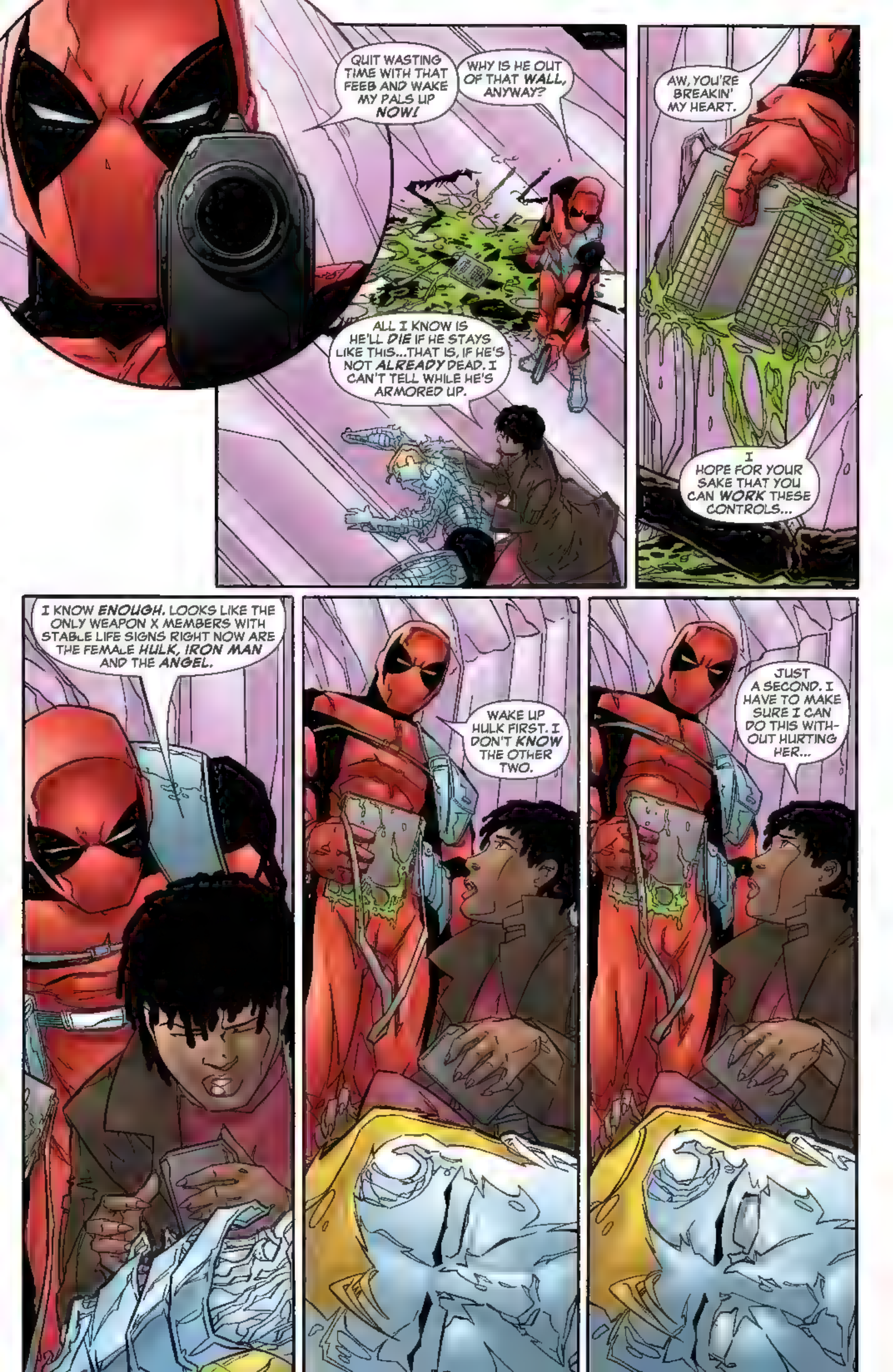

STEPHEN! GET BACK TO THE CONTROL ROOM *IMMEDIATELY!* I NEED HELP WITH SOME CHINESE *HERBALIST* STUFF, AND I'LL BET YOU KNOW *TWICE* WHAT I KNOW ABOUT IT!
STEPHEN? JUST SPEAK OUT LOUD TO RESPOND.
HELLO...?
YOU THERE! BRING BACK DOCTOR STRANGE FROM THE *STASIS GALLERY.*
AT ONCE, EXILES-CASUALTY-FIVE!
AND STOP CALLING ME A "CASUALTY."
ORKIN MAN!
IT'S *HEATHER,* RIGHT? START TURNIN' BIG AN' HAIRY ON ME, AND I'LL BLOW YOUR *BRAINS* OUT BEFORE YOU CAN SAY "SASQUATCH"!
BLAM

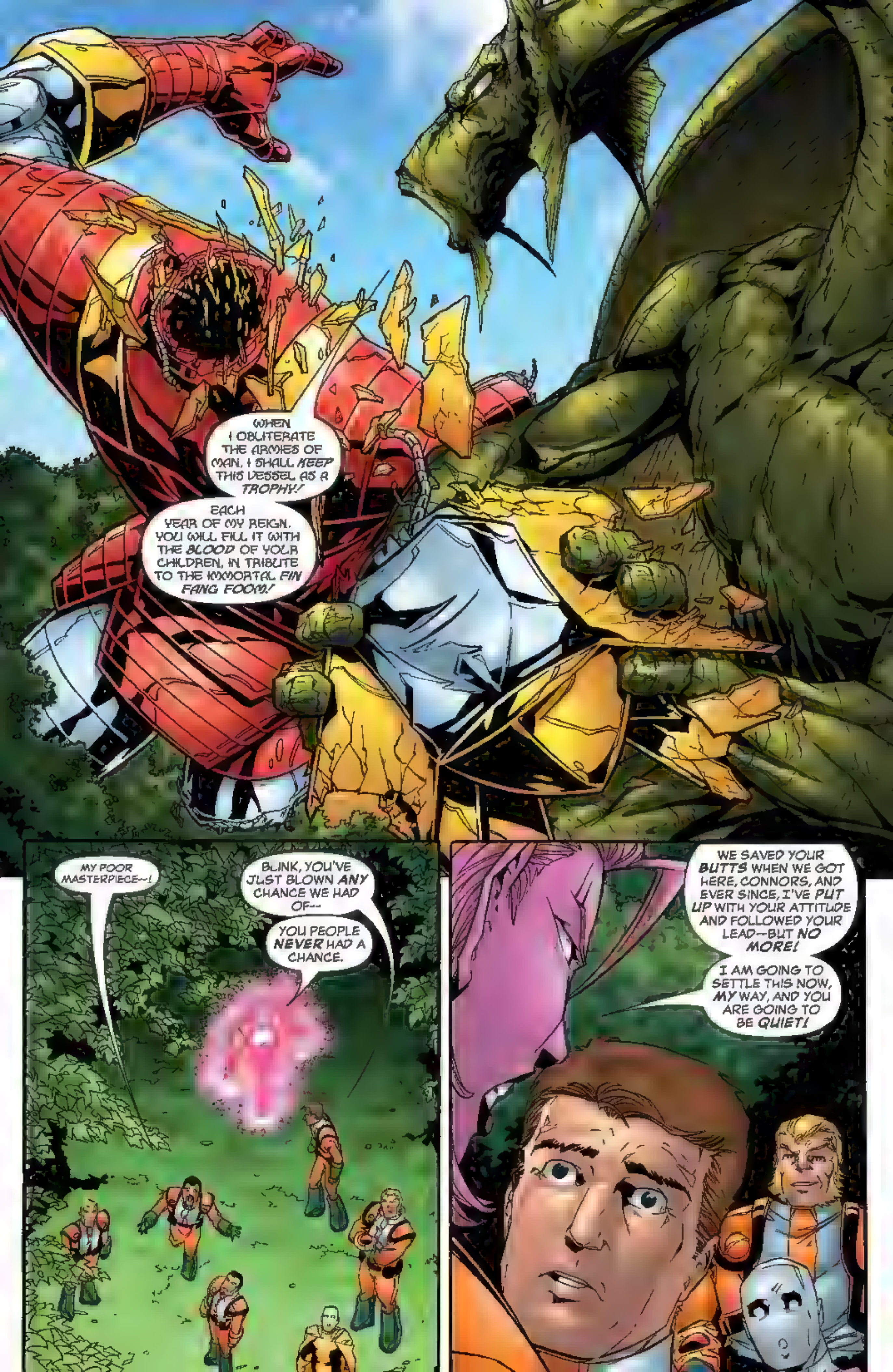

EASY, DEADPOOL. I CAN'T TRANSFORM ANYMORE.
REALLY? HOW LONG HAVE I BEEN... ANIMATEDLY CHALLENGED?
A FEW MONTHS. HOW ARE YOU NOT DEAD NOW?
LADY, I GOT A HEALIN' FACTOR THAT MAKES WOLVERINE LOOK LIKE GHANDI.
YOU'D HAVE TO BLOW ME TO PIECES--DON'T GO GETTIN' IDEAS.
BUT IF YOU'RE OUT OF STASIS, THEN STEPHEN MUST HAVE... OH, NO...
WAS HE A FRIEND OF YOURS? SORRY 'BOUT THAT.
NOW WHERE'S THE TIME-BROKER? I HAVE AN URGE TO SCATTER HIS MATTER--AS IN, GREY.
SKRITCH
SKRITCH
THERE IS NO TIME-BROKER. THERE NEVER WAS. WE'VE TAKEN OVER THE OPERATION NOW.
AND WHERE'S THE REST OF "WE"?
THE OTHER EXILES ARE ON A MISSION.
THAT THEM PLAYIN' SHOGUN WARRIORS UP THERE?
AW, THIS IS TOO PERFECT!
C'MON. CURLY. LET'S DEFROST THE REST OF WEAPON X!
GIVE ME TROUBLE AND I KAKK YOU. MAKE IT HURT, TOO.
RELEASE MIMIC FROM STASIS RIGHT NOW--!
BUT HE IS INJURED. PREMATURE REACTIVATION WILL--
NOW.

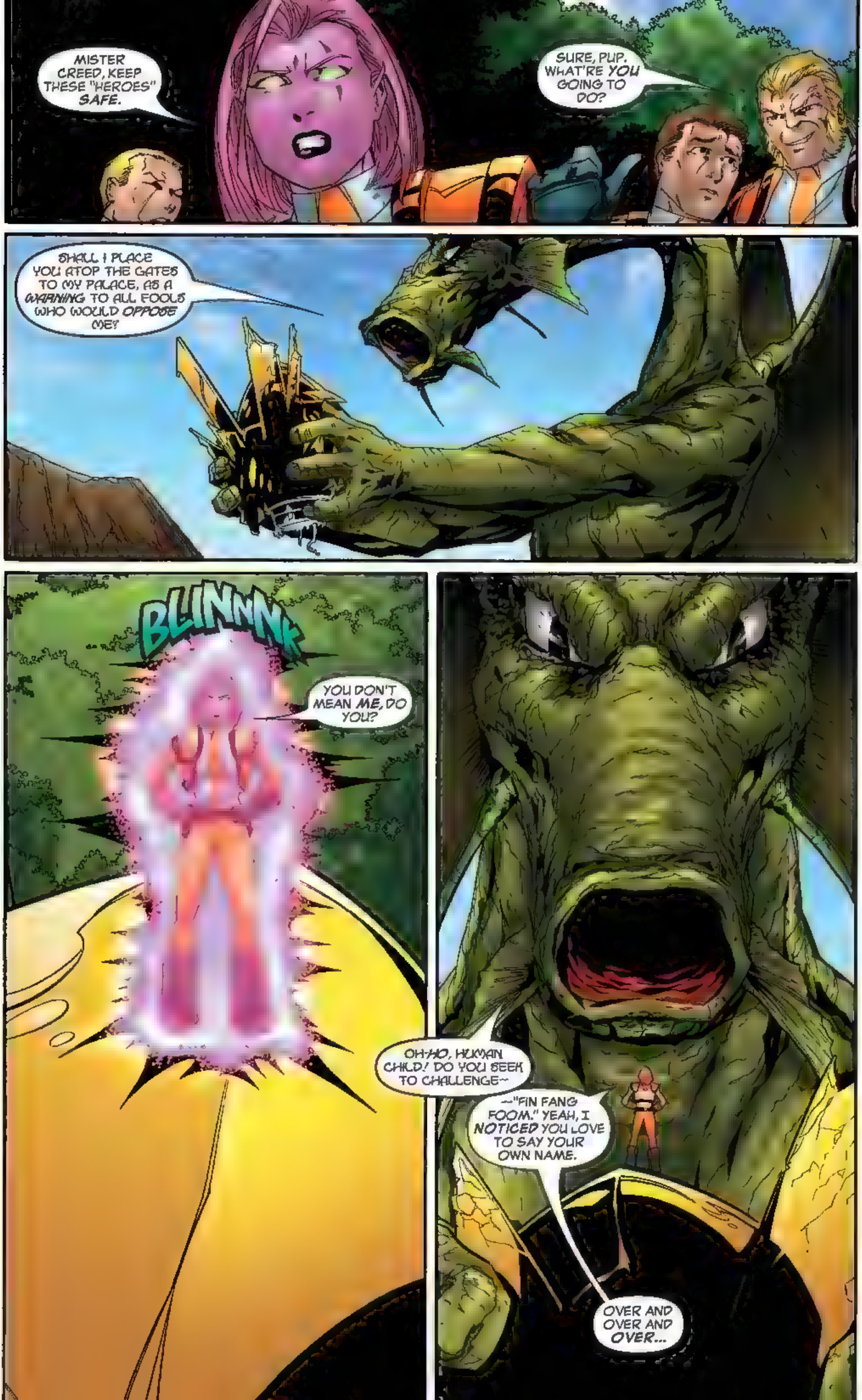

PLACE REMINDS ME OF A SWEDISH ICE HOTEL I BLEW UP ONCE. I BET THE VODKA HERE STINKS, THOUGH...
IF YOU'VE HURT STEPHEN, REVIVING YOUR PARTNERS WON'T BE EASY.
DON'T START WITH THE EXCUSES, HONEY. I WON'T GET BLINDSIDED BY YOUR LIES, LIKE THE LAST TIME WE MET...
"I SMELLED TROUBLE THE MINUTE WE TEAMED UP WITH YOU EXILES TO WASTE THAT SUPER-MUTANT KID.
"SABRETOOTH NEVER SHIED AWAY FROM THE WETWORK...
"...BUT THE MINUTE HE SEES YOUR GIRL, BLINK, BIG BAD SABRETOOTH TURNS TO A PUSSYCAT!
"NEXT THING I KNOW, THOSE TWO ARE CUTTING THEIR OWN DEAL AND I'M EXPENDABLE!"
THIS TIME I'M THROWIN' SABRETOOTH AND BLINK A WELCOME HOME PARTY, WEAPON X STYLE.
STEPHEN...?
HEY, WHAT'S THIS CHUMP DOING DEFROSTED?

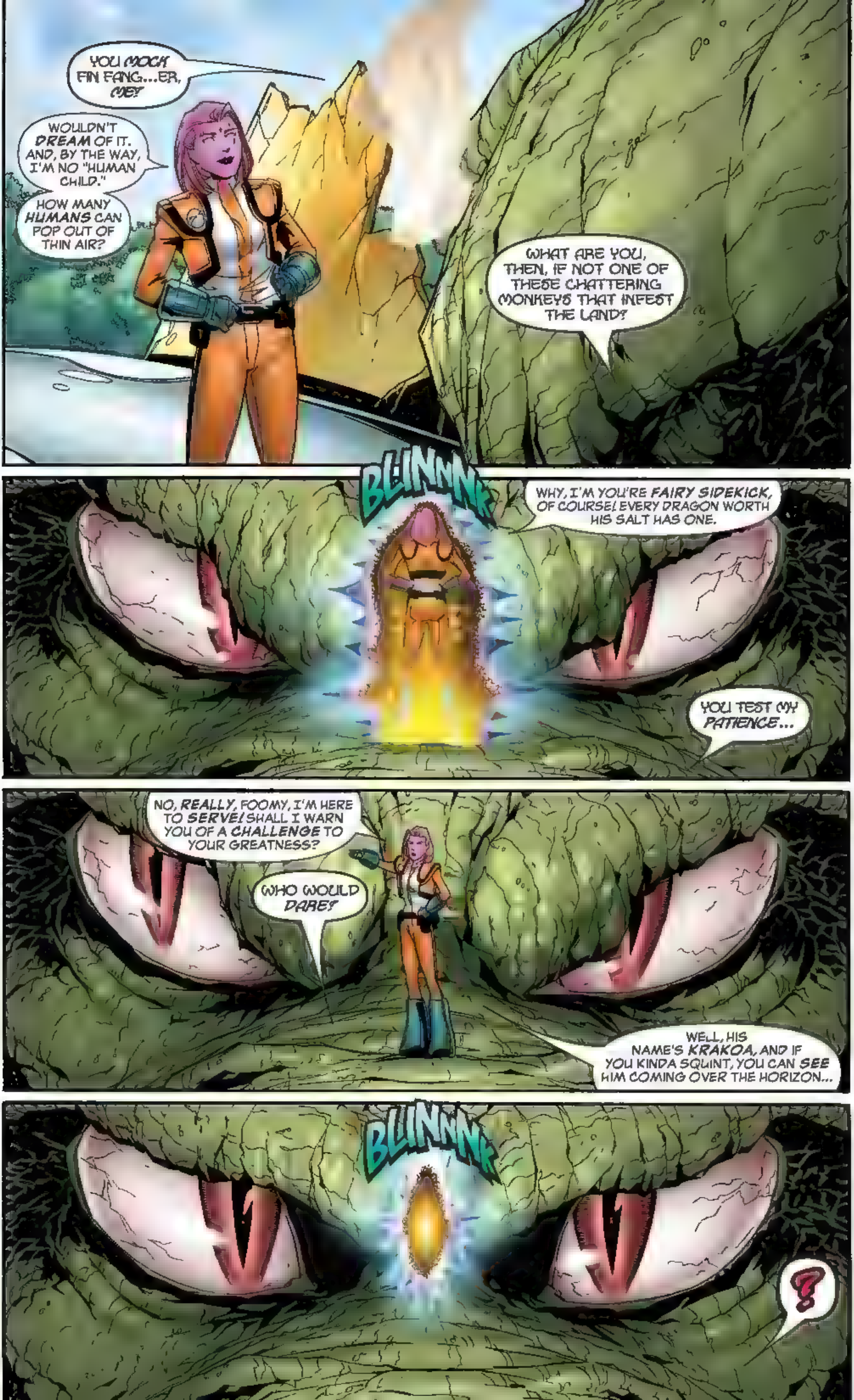

EARTH #3752
HROWRR! YOU FIGHT WELL, FOR A PUPPET...
SHRAKT
...BUT FIN FANG FOOM HAS NO EQUAL IN BATTLE!
SPANNG
WE'VE LOST STARBOARD WEAPONS SYSTEMS!
WE HAVE TO GO. CAN WE STILL FLY?
MISTER CREED! DID HEATHER HAVE ANYTHING FOR US?
PYM
NO REPLY, PUP! SOMETHIN'S WRONG AT MISSION CONTROL!
THIS CAN'T BE HAPPENING... THIS CAN'T BE HAPPENING...

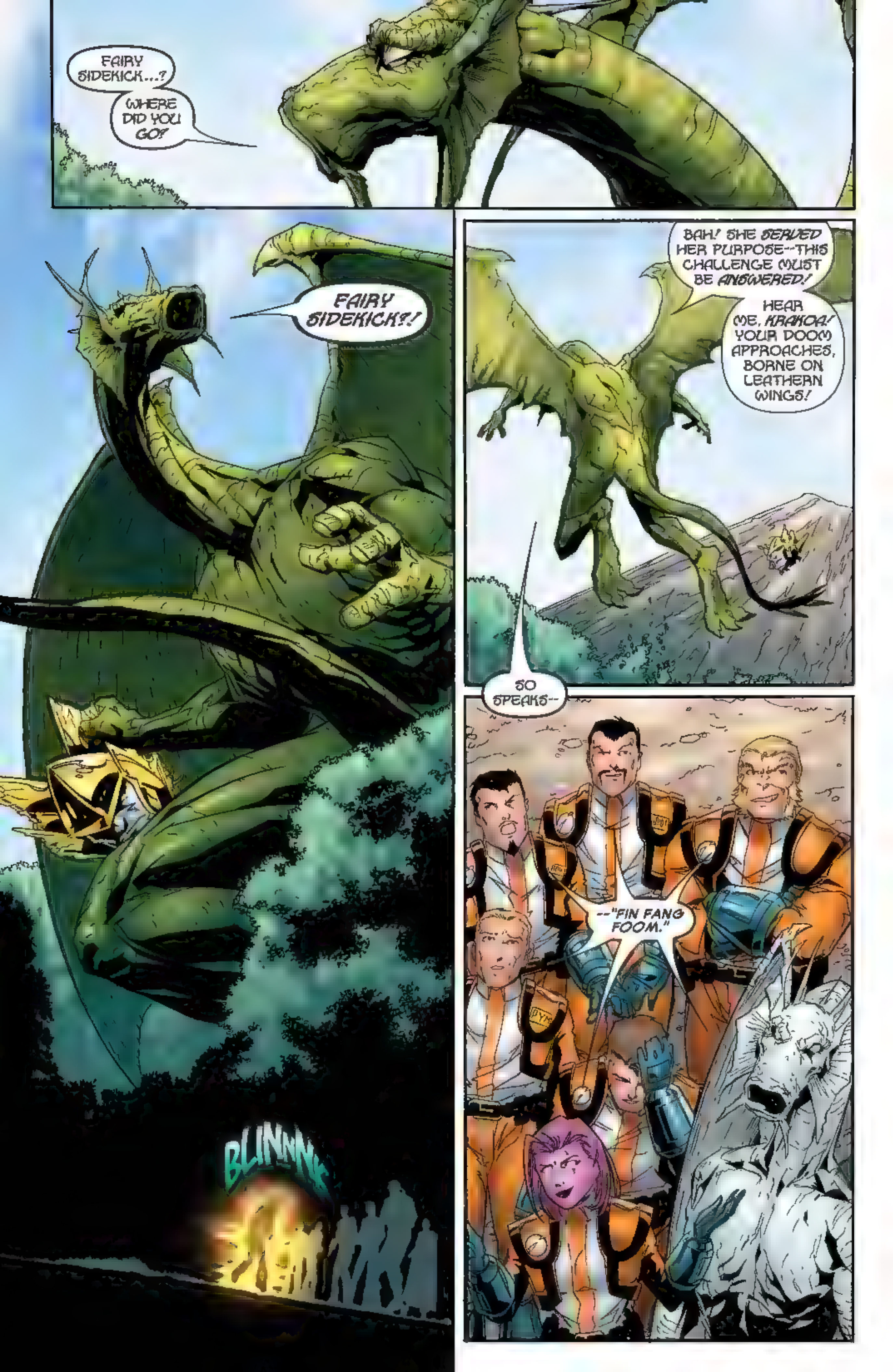

WHERE ARE YOU *HIDING*, LITTLE MONKEYS? COME OUT AND FEED MY *APPETITE!*
PYM
ALL RIGHT, THAT IS *IT*--
--TIME FOR *PLAN B.*
WHU--?
BLINNK
WHAT ARE YOU *DOING?* PUT ME BACK IN THERE!
SORRY, DOCTOR CONNORS, MY BOYFRIEND'S *LIFE* DEPENDS ON YOU!
WAIT HERE WHILE I GET THE OTHERS!
BUT--
CONN
HEY!
BLINNK

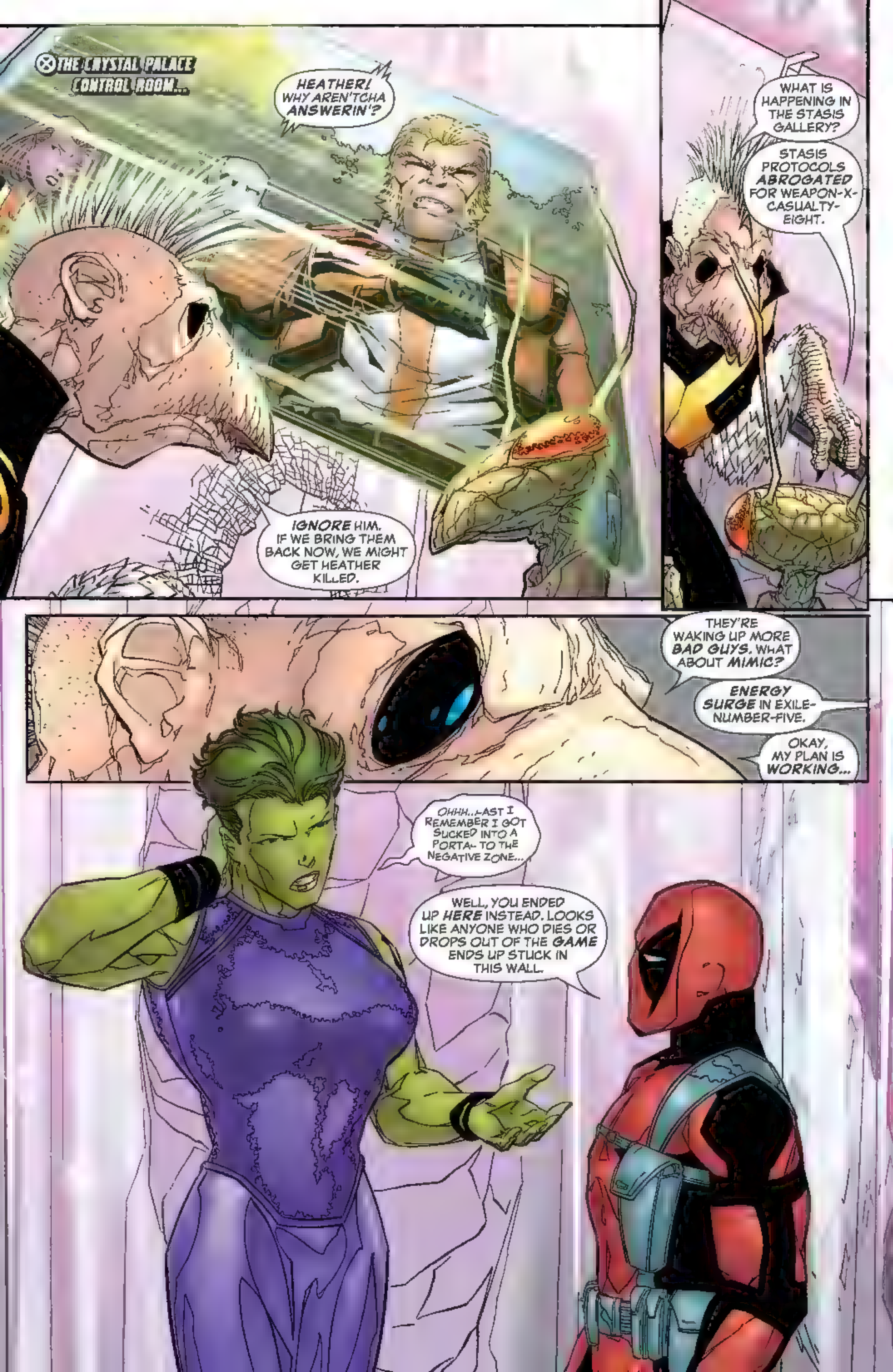

QUIT WASTING TIME WITH THAT FEEB AND WAKE MY PALS UP NOW!
WHY IS HE OUT OF THAT WALL, ANYWAY?
ALL I KNOW IS HE'LL DIE IF HE STAYS LIKE THIS...THAT IS, IF HE'S NOT ALREADY DEAD. I CAN'T TELL WHILE HE'S ARMORED UP.
AW, YOU'RE BREAKIN' MY HEART.
I HOPE FOR YOUR SAKE THAT YOU CAN WORK THESE CONTROLS...
I KNOW ENOUGH. LOOKS LIKE THE ONLY WEAPON X MEMBERS WITH STABLE LIFE SIGNS RIGHT NOW ARE THE FEMALE HULK, IRON MAN AND THE ANGEL.
WAKE UP HULK FIRST. I DON'T KNOW THE OTHER TWO.
JUST A SECOND. I HAVE TO MAKE SURE I CAN DO THIS WITHOUT HURTING HER...

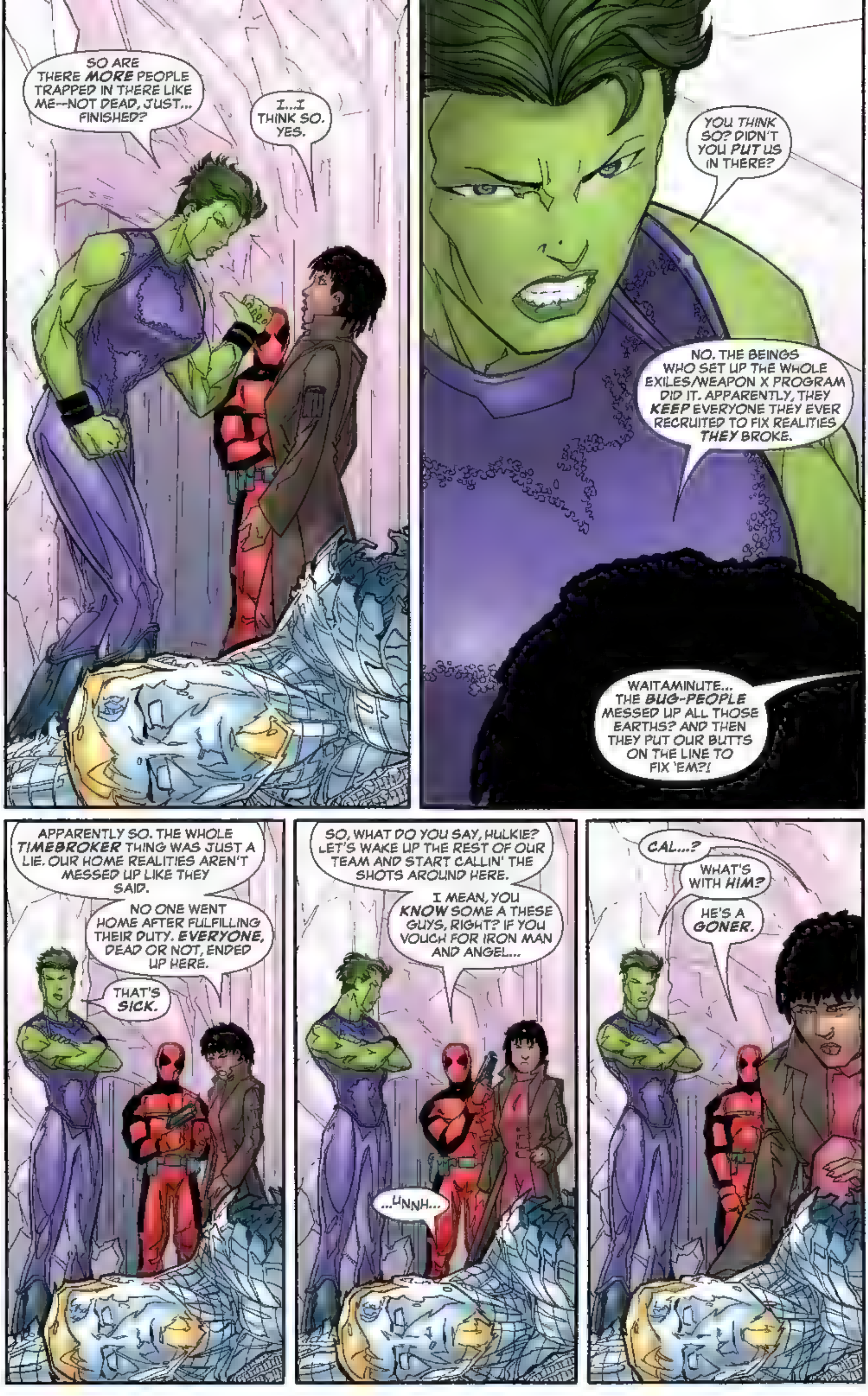

WHEN I OBLITERATE THE ARMIES OF MAN, I SHALL *KEEP* THIS VESSEL AS A *TROPHY!*
EACH YEAR OF MY REIGN, YOU WILL FILL IT WITH THE *BLOOD* OF YOUR CHILDREN, IN TRIBUTE TO THE IMMORTAL *FIN FANG FOOM!*
MY POOR MASTERPIECE--!
BLINK, YOU'VE JUST BLOWN *ANY* CHANCE WE HAD OF--
YOU PEOPLE *NEVER* HAD A CHANCE.
WE SAVED YOUR *BUTTS* WHEN WE GOT HERE, CONNORS, AND EVER SINCE, I'VE *PUT UP* WITH YOUR ATTITUDE AND FOLLOWED YOUR LEAD--BUT *NO MORE!*
I AM GOING TO SETTLE THIS NOW, *MY* WAY, AND YOU ARE GOING TO BE *QUIET!*

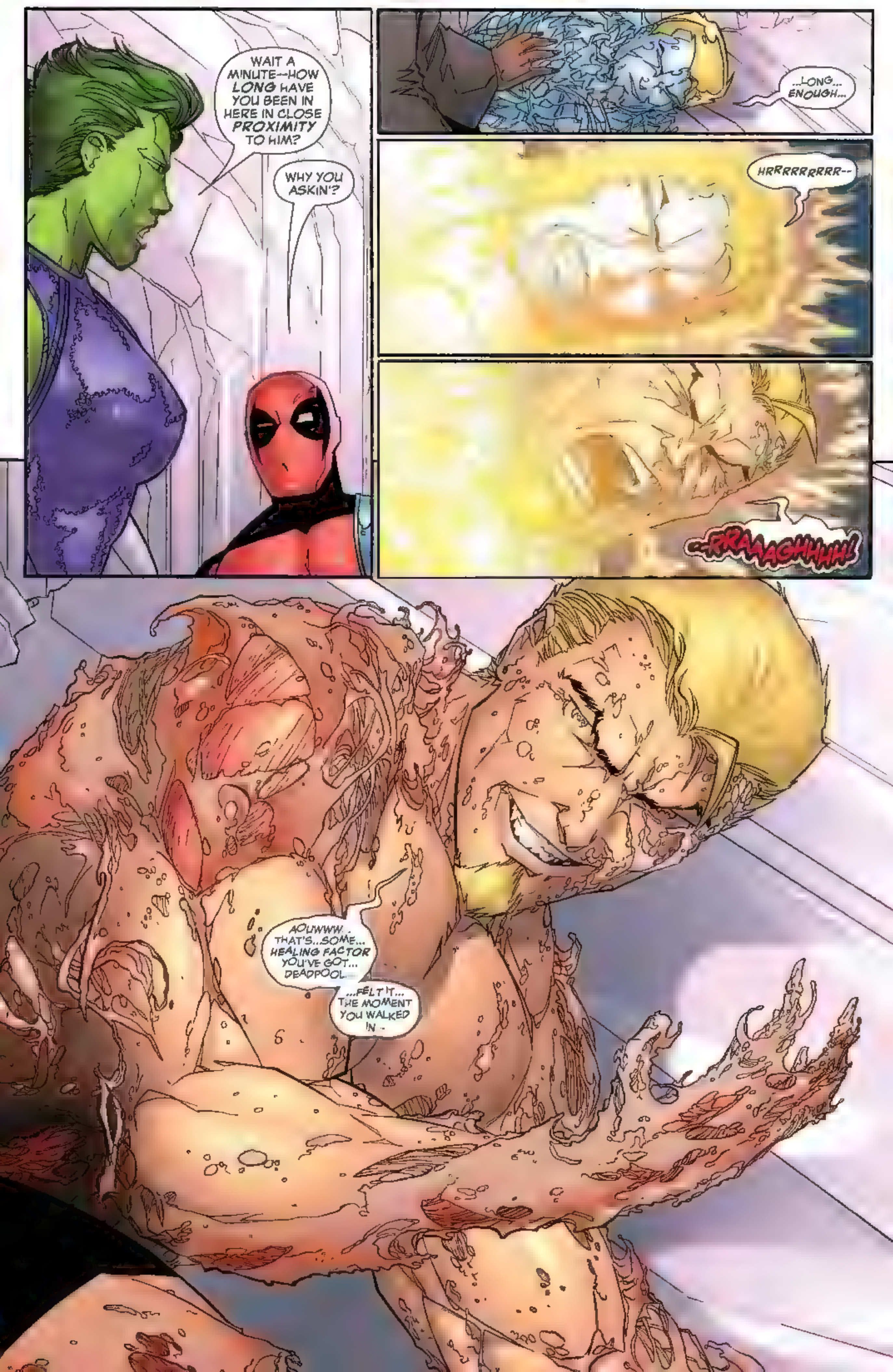

MISTER CREED, KEEP THESE "HEROES" SAFE.
SURE, PUP. WHAT'RE YOU GOING TO DO?
SHALL I PLACE YOU ATOP THE GATES TO MY PALACE, AS A WARNING TO ALL FOOLS WHO WOULD OPPOSE ME?
BLINNNK
YOU DON'T MEAN ME, DO YOU?
OH-HO, HUMAN CHILD! DO YOU SEEK TO CHALLENGE~
~"FIN FANG FOOM." YEAH, I NOTICED YOU LOVE TO SAY YOUR OWN NAME.
OVER AND OVER AND OVER...

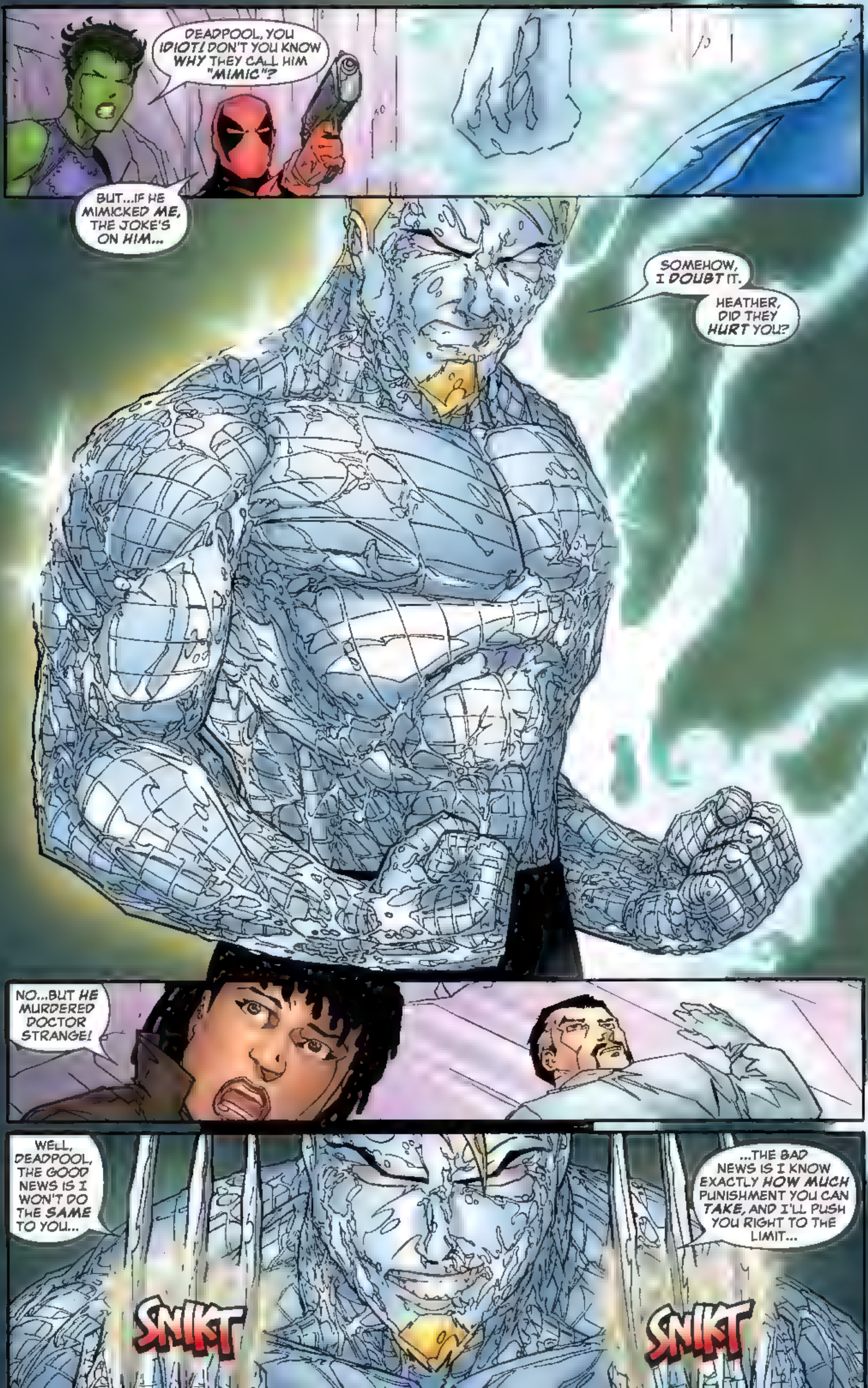

YOU *MOCK* FIN FANG...ER, *ME?*
WOULDN'T **DREAM** OF IT. AND, BY THE WAY, I'M NO "HUMAN CHILD."
HOW MANY **HUMANS** CAN POP OUT OF THIN AIR?
WHAT ARE YOU, THEN, IF NOT ONE OF THESE CHATTERING MONKEYS THAT INFEST THE LAND?
BLINNNK
WHY, I'M YOU'RE **FAIRY SIDEKICK**, OF COURSE! EVERY DRAGON WORTH HIS SALT HAS ONE.
YOU TEST MY *PATIENCE*...
NO, **REALLY**, FOOMY, I'M HERE TO **SERVE!** SHALL I WARN YOU OF A **CHALLENGE** TO YOUR GREATNESS?
WHO WOULD *DARE?*
WELL, HIS NAME'S **KRAKOA**, AND IF YOU KINDA SQUINT, YOU CAN **SEE** HIM COMING OVER THE HORIZON...
BLINNNK
?

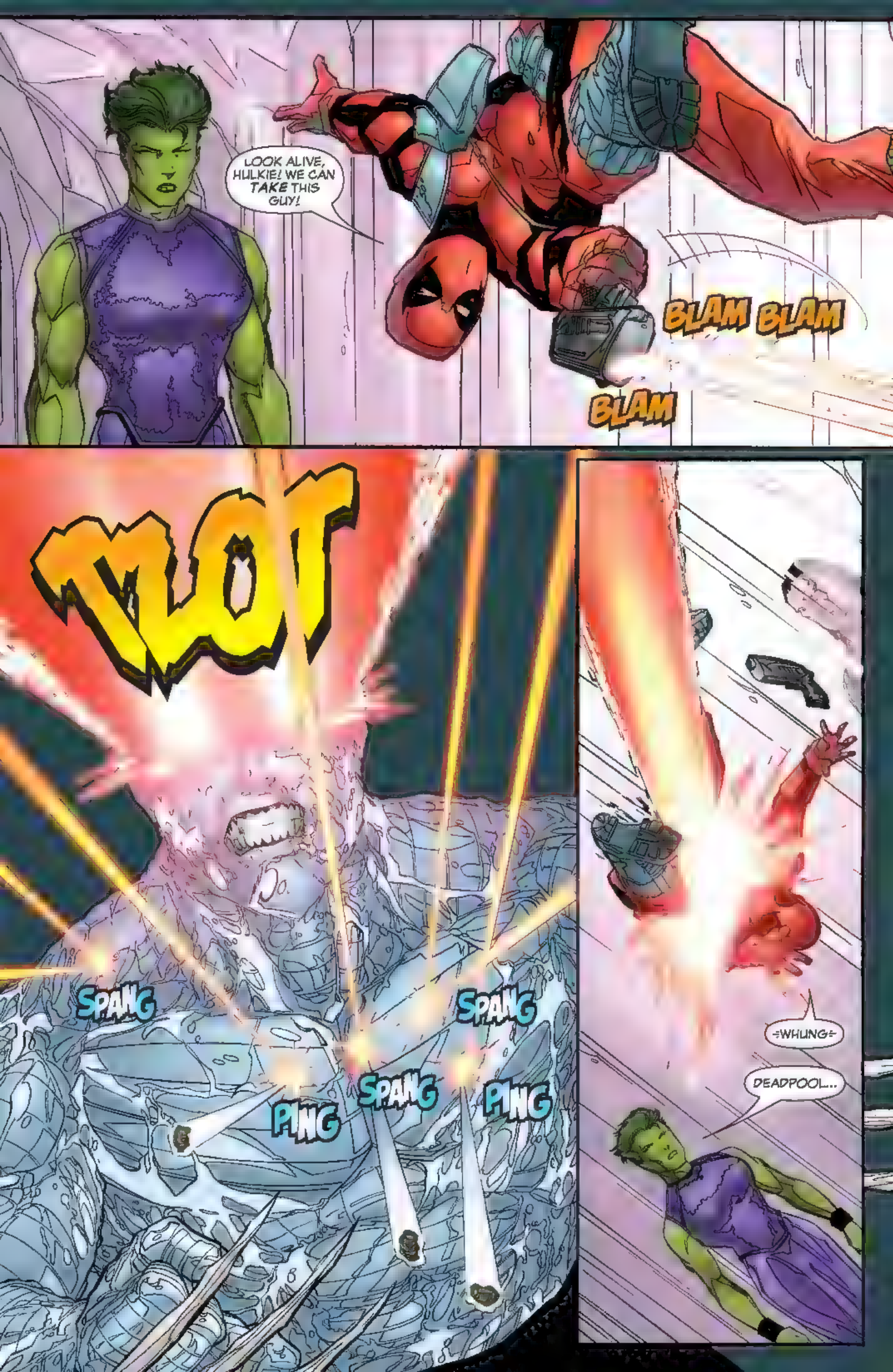

FAIRY SIDEKICK...?
WHERE DID YOU GO?
FAIRY SIDEKICK?!
BLINNNK
BAH! SHE SERVED HER PURPOSE--THIS CHALLENGE MUST BE ANSWERED!
HEAR ME, KRAKOA! YOUR DOOM APPROACHES, BORNE ON LEATHERN WINGS!
SO SPEAKS--
--"FIN FANG FOOM."

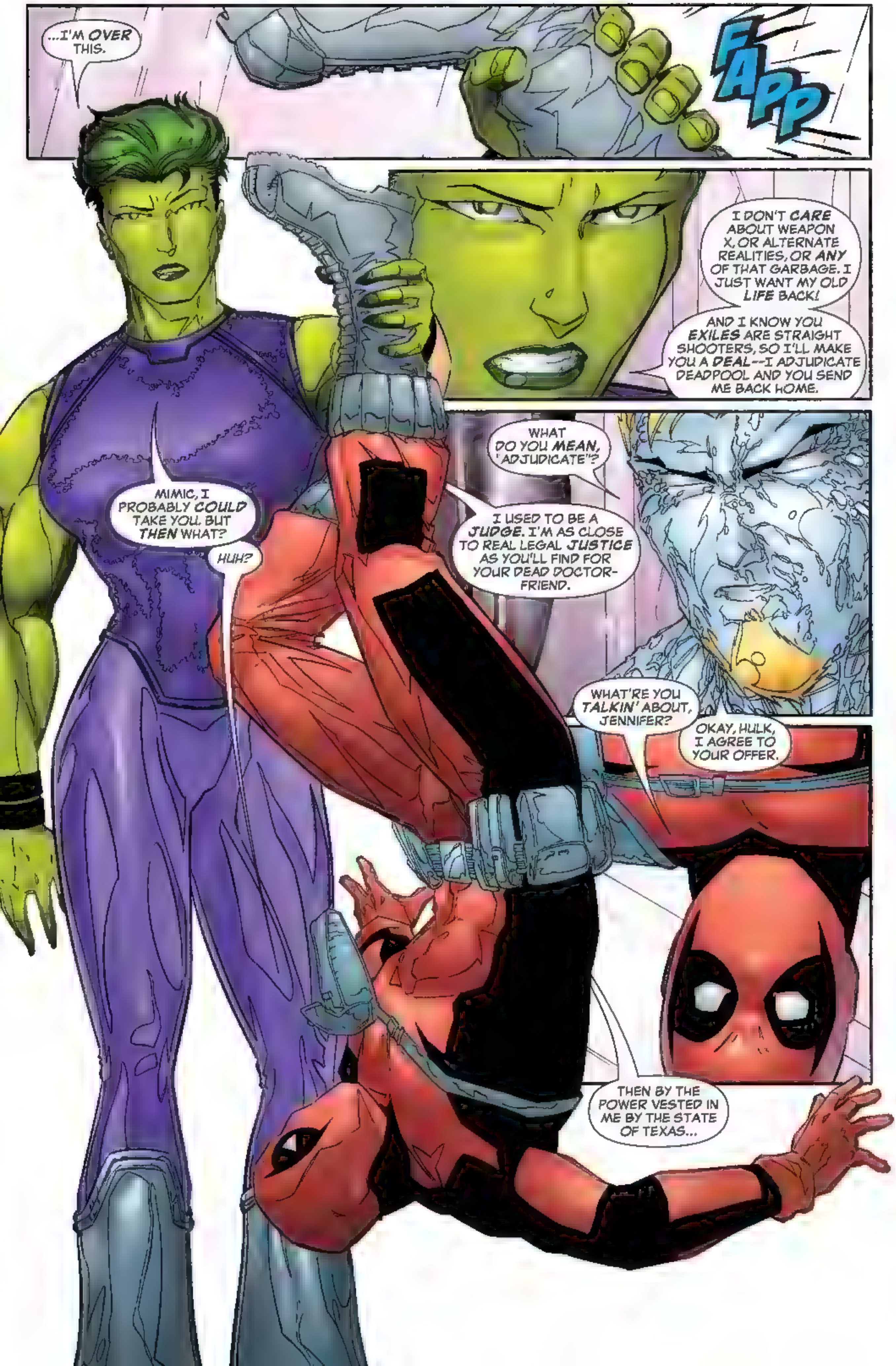

THE CRYSTAL PALACE CONTROL ROOM...
HEATHER! WHY AREN'TCHA ANSWERIN'?
IGNORE HIM. IF WE BRING THEM BACK NOW, WE MIGHT GET HEATHER KILLED.
WHAT IS HAPPENING IN THE STASIS GALLERY?
STASIS PROTOCOLS ABROGATED FOR WEAPON-X-CASUALTY-EIGHT.
THEY'RE WAKING UP MORE BAD GUYS. WHAT ABOUT MIMIC?
ENERGY SURGE IN EXILE-NUMBER-FIVE.
OKAY, MY PLAN IS WORKING...
OHHH...LAST I REMEMBER I GOT SUCKED INTO A PORTAL TO THE NEGATIVE ZONE...
WELL, YOU ENDED UP HERE INSTEAD. LOOKS LIKE ANYONE WHO DIES OR DROPS OUT OF THE GAME ENDS UP STUCK IN THIS WALL.

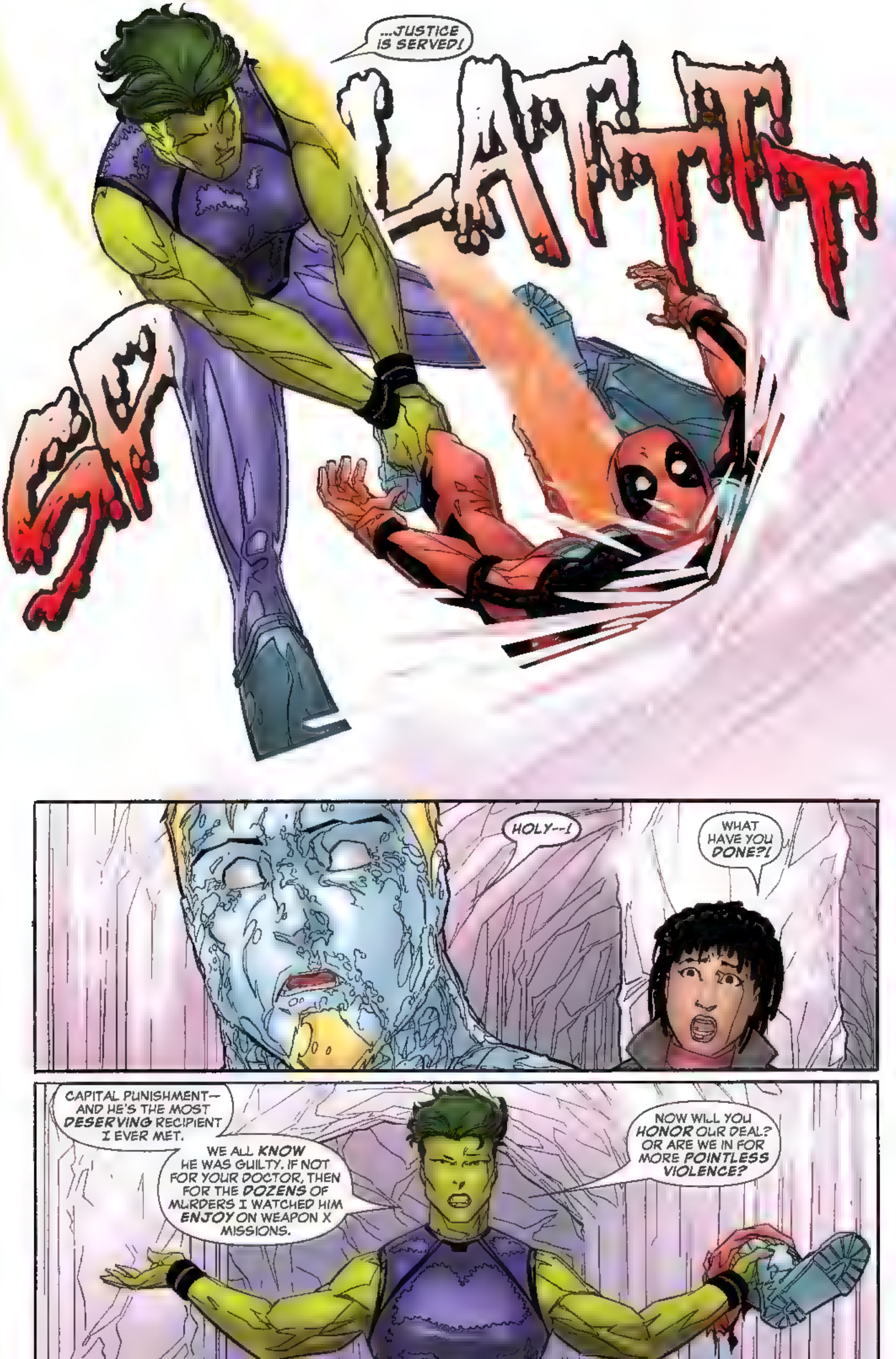

SO ARE THERE *MORE* PEOPLE TRAPPED IN THERE LIKE ME--NOT DEAD, JUST... FINISHED?
I...I THINK SO. YES.
YOU THINK SO? DIDN'T YOU *PUT* US IN THERE?
NO. THE BEINGS WHO SET UP THE WHOLE EXILES/WEAPON X PROGRAM DID IT. APPARENTLY, THEY *KEEP* EVERYONE THEY EVER RECRUITED TO FIX REALITIES *THEY* BROKE.
WAITAMINUTE... THE *BUG-PEOPLE* MESSED UP ALL THOSE EARTHS? AND THEN THEY PUT OUR BUTTS ON THE LINE TO FIX 'EM?!
APPARENTLY SO. THE WHOLE *TIMEBROKER* THING WAS JUST A LIE. OUR HOME REALITIES AREN'T MESSED UP LIKE THEY SAID.
NO ONE WENT HOME AFTER FULFILLING THEIR DUTY. *EVERYONE*, DEAD OR NOT, ENDED UP HERE.
THAT'S *SICK.*
SO, WHAT DO YOU SAY, HULKIE? LET'S WAKE UP THE REST OF OUR TEAM AND START CALLIN' THE SHOTS AROUND HERE.
I MEAN, YOU *KNOW* SOME A THESE GUYS, RIGHT? IF YOU VOUCH FOR IRON MAN AND ANGEL...
...UNNH...
CAL...?
WHAT'S WITH *HIM?*
HE'S A *GONER.*

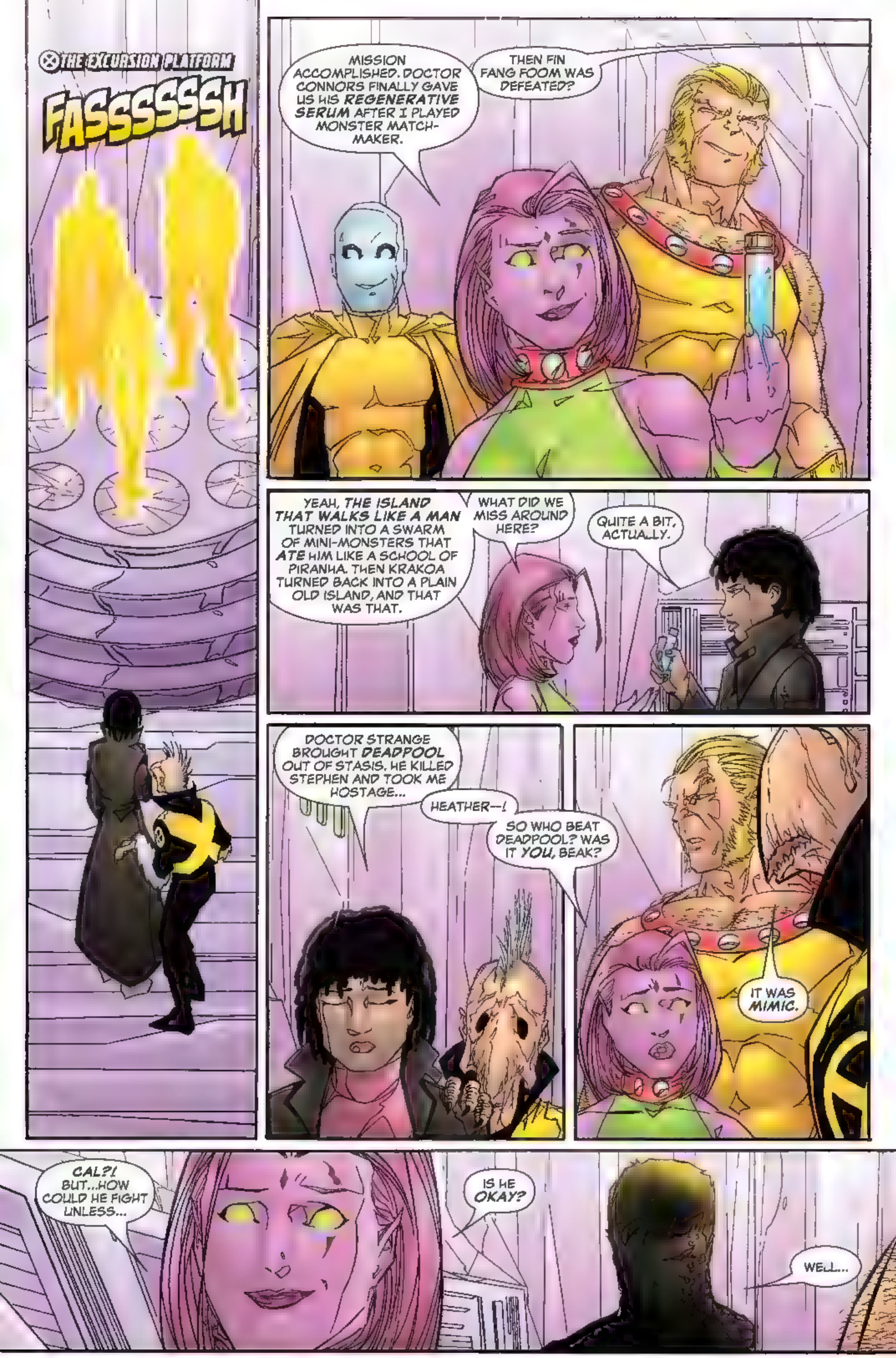

WAIT A MINUTE--HOW LONG HAVE YOU BEEN IN HERE IN CLOSE PROXIMITY TO HIM?
WHY YOU ASKIN'?
...LONG... ENOUGH...
HRRRRRRRRR--
--RRAAAAGHHHH!
AOUWWW. . THAT'S...SOME... HEALING FACTOR YOU'VE GOT... DEADPOOL.
...FELT IT... THE MOMENT YOU WALKED IN --

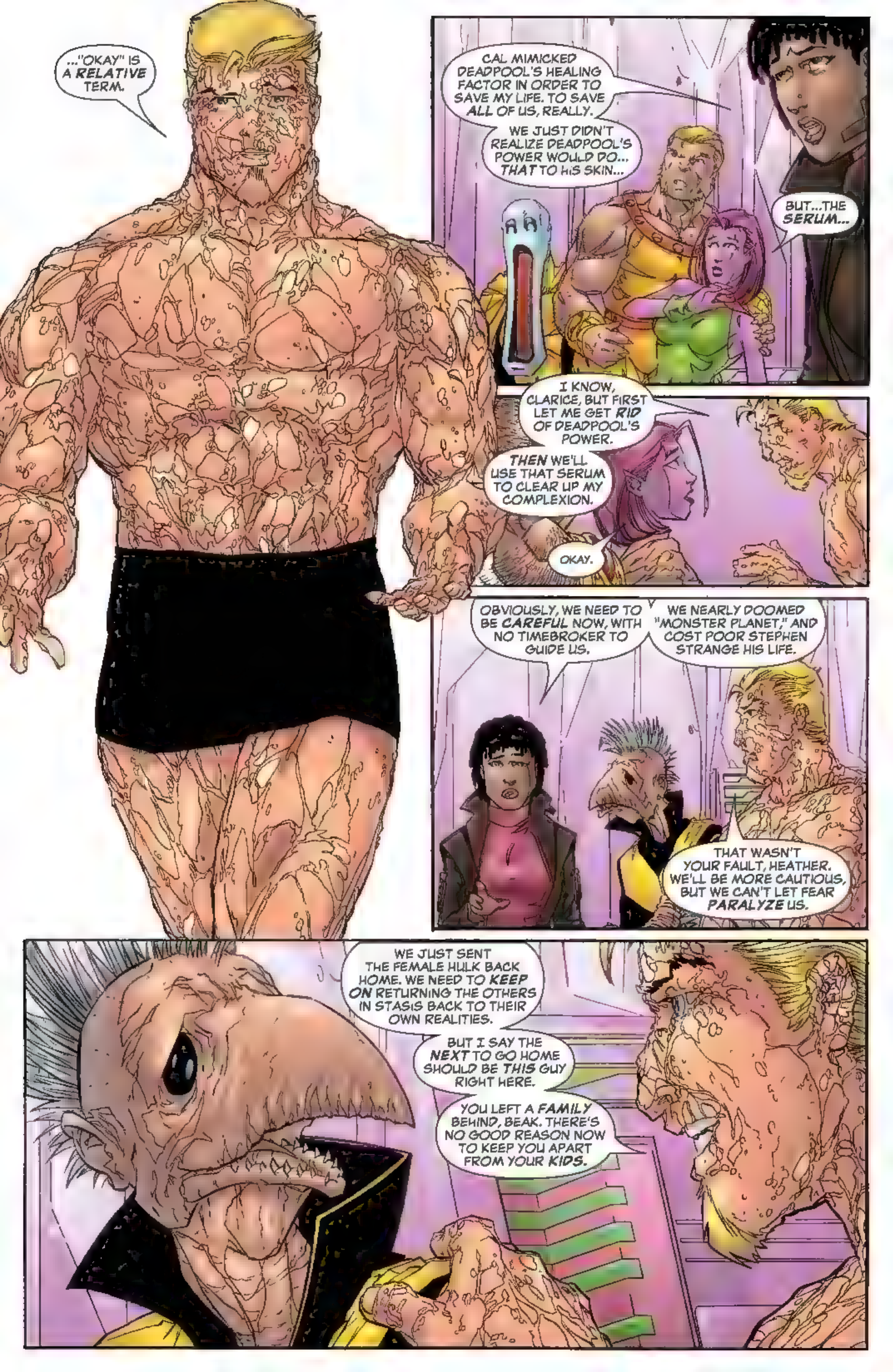

DEADPOOL, YOU IDIOT! DON'T YOU KNOW WHY THEY CALL HIM "MIMIC"?
BUT...IF HE MIMICKED ME, THE JOKE'S ON HIM...
SOMEHOW, I DOUBT IT.
HEATHER, DID THEY HURT YOU?
NO...BUT HE MURDERED DOCTOR STRANGE!
WELL, DEADPOOL, THE GOOD NEWS IS I WON'T DO THE SAME TO YOU...
...THE BAD NEWS IS I KNOW EXACTLY HOW MUCH PUNISHMENT YOU CAN TAKE, AND I'LL PUSH YOU RIGHT TO THE LIMIT...
SNIKT
SNIKT


LOOK ALIVE, HULKIE! WE CAN *TAKE* THIS GUY!
BLAM BLAM
BLAM
ZOT
SPANG
SPANG
SPANG
PING
PING
-WHUNG-
DEADPOOL...


...I'M OVER THIS.
FAPP
I DON'T CARE ABOUT WEAPON X, OR ALTERNATE REALITIES, OR ANY OF THAT GARBAGE. I JUST WANT MY OLD LIFE BACK!
AND I KNOW YOU EXILES ARE STRAIGHT SHOOTERS, SO I'LL MAKE YOU A DEAL--I ADJUDICATE DEADPOOL AND YOU SEND ME BACK HOME.
WHAT DO YOU MEAN, 'ADJUDICATE'?
MIMIC, I PROBABLY COULD TAKE YOU. BUT THEN WHAT?
HUH?
I USED TO BE A JUDGE. I'M AS CLOSE TO REAL LEGAL JUSTICE AS YOU'LL FIND FOR YOUR DEAD DOCTOR-FRIEND.
WHAT'RE YOU TALKIN' ABOUT, JENNIFER?
OKAY, HULK, I AGREE TO YOUR OFFER.
THEN BY THE POWER VESTED IN ME BY THE STATE OF TEXAS...


...JUSTICE IS SERVED!
SPLATTT!
HOLY--!
WHAT HAVE YOU DONE?!
CAPITAL PUNISHMENT— AND HE'S THE MOST DESERVING RECIPIENT I EVER MET.
WE ALL KNOW HE WAS GUILTY. IF NOT FOR YOUR DOCTOR, THEN FOR THE DOZENS OF MURDERS I WATCHED HIM ENJOY ON WEAPON X MISSIONS.
NOW WILL YOU HONOR OUR DEAL? OR ARE WE IN FOR MORE POINTLESS VIOLENCE?


THE EXCURSION PLATFORM
FASSSSSSH
MISSION ACCOMPLISHED. DOCTOR CONNORS FINALLY GAVE US HIS REGENERATIVE SERUM AFTER I PLAYED MONSTER MATCH-MAKER.
THEN FIN FANG FOOM WAS DEFEATED?
YEAH, THE ISLAND THAT WALKS LIKE A MAN TURNED INTO A SWARM OF MINI-MONSTERS THAT ATE HIM LIKE A SCHOOL OF PIRANHA. THEN KRAKOA TURNED BACK INTO A PLAIN OLD ISLAND, AND THAT WAS THAT.
WHAT DID WE MISS AROUND HERE?
QUITE A BIT, ACTUALLY.
DOCTOR STRANGE BROUGHT DEADPOOL OUT OF STASIS. HE KILLED STEPHEN AND TOOK ME HOSTAGE...
HEATHER--!
SO WHO BEAT DEADPOOL? WAS IT YOU, BEAK?
IT WAS MIMIC.
CAL?! BUT...HOW COULD HE FIGHT UNLESS...
IS HE OKAY?
WELL...


CAL MIMICKED DEADPOOL'S HEALING FACTOR IN ORDER TO SAVE MY LIFE. TO SAVE **ALL** OF US, REALLY.
WE JUST DIDN'T REALIZE DEADPOOL'S POWER WOULD DO... **THAT** TO HIS SKIN...
BUT...THE **SERUM**...
I KNOW, CLARICE, BUT FIRST LET ME GET **RID** OF DEADPOOL'S POWER.
THEN WE'LL USE THAT SERUM TO CLEAR UP MY COMPLEXION.
OKAY.
..."OKAY" IS A **RELATIVE** TERM.
OBVIOUSLY, WE NEED TO BE **CAREFUL** NOW, WITH NO TIMEBROKER TO GUIDE US.
WE NEARLY DOOMED "MONSTER PLANET," AND COST POOR STEPHEN STRANGE HIS LIFE.
THAT WASN'T YOUR FAULT, HEATHER. WE'LL BE MORE CAUTIOUS, BUT WE CAN'T LET FEAR **PARALYZE** US.
WE JUST SENT THE FEMALE HULK BACK HOME. WE NEED TO **KEEP ON** RETURNING THE OTHERS IN STASIS BACK TO THEIR OWN REALITIES.
BUT I SAY THE **NEXT** TO GO HOME SHOULD BE **THIS** GUY RIGHT HERE.
YOU LEFT A **FAMILY** BEHIND, BEAK. THERE'S NO GOOD REASON NOW TO KEEP YOU APART FROM YOUR **KIDS**.

REALITY CHECK

X-MEN TITLES

HOUSE OF M 4: Guess who?! HAWKEYE joins the fight as the House of M rockets forward! Rockets, I say!

UNCANNY X-MEN 463: It's the House of M Marvel Girl and Psylocke find themselves in a fight for their lives against the alleged granddaughter of Magneto! By Chris Claremon and Alan Davis!

NIGHTCRAWLER 9: Kurt and Christine must race to Florida to stop a slaughter. If the slaughter is O-Town related, take your time, Kurt!

MUTOPIA X 2: It's the House of M! Ismael Ortega and Bishop come face-to-face with a terroris safe house!

ASTONISHING X-MEN 12: The conclusion to Joss Whedon and John Cassaday's first yea is here! You will be talking about this issue fo years to come!

WEAPON X: DAYS OF FUTURE NOW 2: The Weapon X saga continues! As we travel into the not-too-distant future, the X-Men meet their fate Big fiery death!

NEW X-MEN 17: It's the House of M! It's off to Japan to discover just what atrocities Empero Sunfire has been committing this week!

X-MEN. KITTY PRYDE–SHADOW & FLAME 3 Kitty's in the fight for her life! Meanwhile Lockheed's life hangs in the balance. With art by legendary X-Artist, Paul Smith

NEW X-MEN: HELLIONS 4: The Hellions wan out of their deal with Kingmaker. Something tells me that's easier said than done. Punching and kicking ensue!

NYX 7: The NYX finale is finally here. It's a drag-out, knock-down fight to end all fights (Well, not all fights. But some!)

CABLE/DEADPOOL 18: Cable's a baby. It's weird.

ORORO: BEFORE THE STORM 3: Storm goes inside the hidden temple and faces a foe more powerful then she could have ever imagined!

X-MEN THE END: BOOK TWO 5: Now tha Sinister's secret is out, what the heck is going to happen to Gambit and Rogue's kids? I'll give you a hint. it ain't daycare!

X-MEN UNLIMITED 10. Two new tales of X-Men from acclaimed novelist Joe Meno (*Hairstyles of the Damned*)

WOLVERINE 31: Say it ain't so! The conclusion to "Agent of S.H.I.E.L.D." is here. Wolverine fights and fights and you cannot miss it.

X-MEN 174: Mystique wants to join the X-Men Is there room at the inn? Guest starring ALL the current X-Men

Greetings from the land of readings, EXILES fans! Tony Bedard, here, to answer a couple of the letters that deluged the Marvel offices since my last plea for you to write more mail. I hope you've enjoyed the recent shift in the direction of our stories. The action is about to bust wide open next issue as we welcome aboard new regular penciler Paul Pelletier (of SHE-HULK and G.L.A. fame) for a saga we're calling "World Tour." We're going to travel to several familiar alternate realities from Marvel history, and we're going to see a lot of new faces in the Exiles lineup, so whatever you do, don't miss our next issue!

To the hardest working team in comics,

First off, let me begin by thanking you for producing a quality product just about every two weeks. I honestly don't know how you guys do it. In this era of ever-shifting release dates and weekly disappointments, it's nice to have one comic released when it's scheduled to. Ah, it reminds me of the good old days when a book was released on time or heads rolled (or a pre-made filler story was inserted into the mix). Therefore, I hereby nominate the Exiles staff for bonuses and raises all around!

I loved the downtime in issue 66. This is the kind of stuff that had been missing for the last couple of action-packed storylines. Please continue to feature more interaction between the members of the Exiles. I love the action and the earth(s)-shaking conflicts, but the character development that occurred because of the relationships between characters like Thunderbird and Nocturne, Blink and Mimic, Morph and Sunfire, etc. is the stuff that transforms a bunch of pages with pretty pictures and word bubbles into literature—stories not just about super heroes, but about people with feelings and souls.

Oh, and please consider bringing Nocturne back, even if only for a one-nighter. (Pardon the pun.)

Michael Allen
California

Good news: Nocturne will return! Bad news: not in the pages of EXILES. Er, ah... GREAT news: Nocturne will be back this November in the pages of the all-new, NEW EXCALIBUR series! Check it out!

As for downtime and character interaction, it's quite a trick to shoehorn it in amidst the world-saving missions, ever-changing cast and visiting a whole new Earth every few issues. I'm amazed at how well Judd did it back in the day. But I'm definitely trying to get more character-driven stuff in, and set up a home base for our heroes that will facilitate these types of scenes. Why not write me a letter after every issue and let me know how I'm doing. That goes for all of you!

To Tony B. and any interested party,

You asked for letters so on the advice of my wife and my best friend (who are both tired of hearing my ranting) I am happy to bend your ear.

I will continue to enjoy the Exiles' exploits as long as there is a coherent reason for them to stick together. Sure, they can continue fixing broken realities, but now that they don't HAVE to, wouldn't checking back with their families and teams make immediate sense? A peek into everyone's "home" world seems to be in order about now.

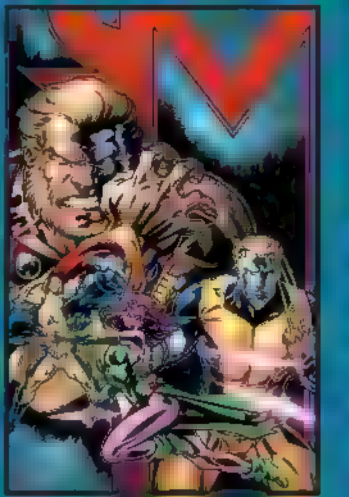
Lastly, the lineup for Exiles 100. Spider-Ham, Rocket Raccoon, Squirrel Girl, Bamf Morph, and Willie Lumpkin 2099 vs. Howard the Duck and Doop.

JJ Macias
Overland Park, KS

Yep, a visit home is definitely in order for our heroes. In fact, they will start doing exactly that next issue by taking poor Beak home. But once they get there they are going to find that somebody rearranged the furniture while Beak was away. Yes, my friends, we're off to join the party being thrown at the House of M—fashionably late, but making a grand entrance, nonetheless. So be here next month to welcome aboard penciler Paul Pelletier, inker Rick Magyar and colorist Wil Quintana for an issue that will absolutely knock your socks off! ...and then you can write me a letter about it.

—Tony B.

NEXT ISSUE:



MARVEL
WHAT IF?
1

WHAT IF VENOM...

...POSSESSED DEADPOOL?

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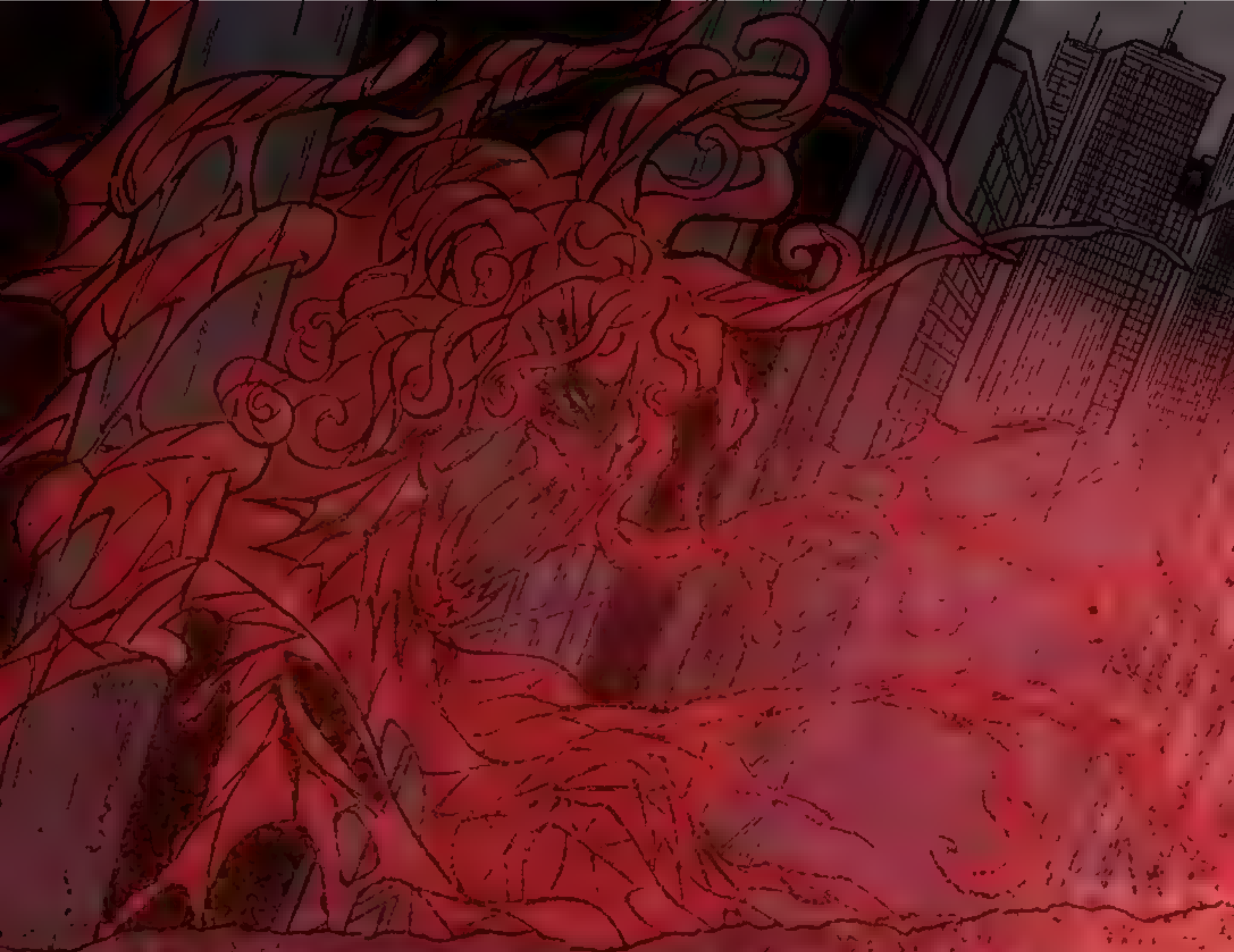

RICK REMENDER
WRITER

SHAWN MOLL
PENCILS

MARK IRWIN, JOHN LIVESAY & WALDEN WONG
WITH **SCOTT HANNA**
INKS

CHRIS SOTOMAYOR
COLORS

VC'S CLAYTON COWLES
LETTERS

SKOTTIE YOUNG
COVER ART

DAMIEN LUCCHESE
PRODUCTION

TOM BRENNAN
ASSOCIATE EDITOR

STEPHEN WACKER
APOLOGIZER

AXEL ALONSO – EDITOR-IN-CHIEF
DAN BUCKLEY – PUBLISHER

JOE QUESADA – CHIEF CREATIVE OFFICER
ALAN FINE – EXECUTIVE PRODUCER

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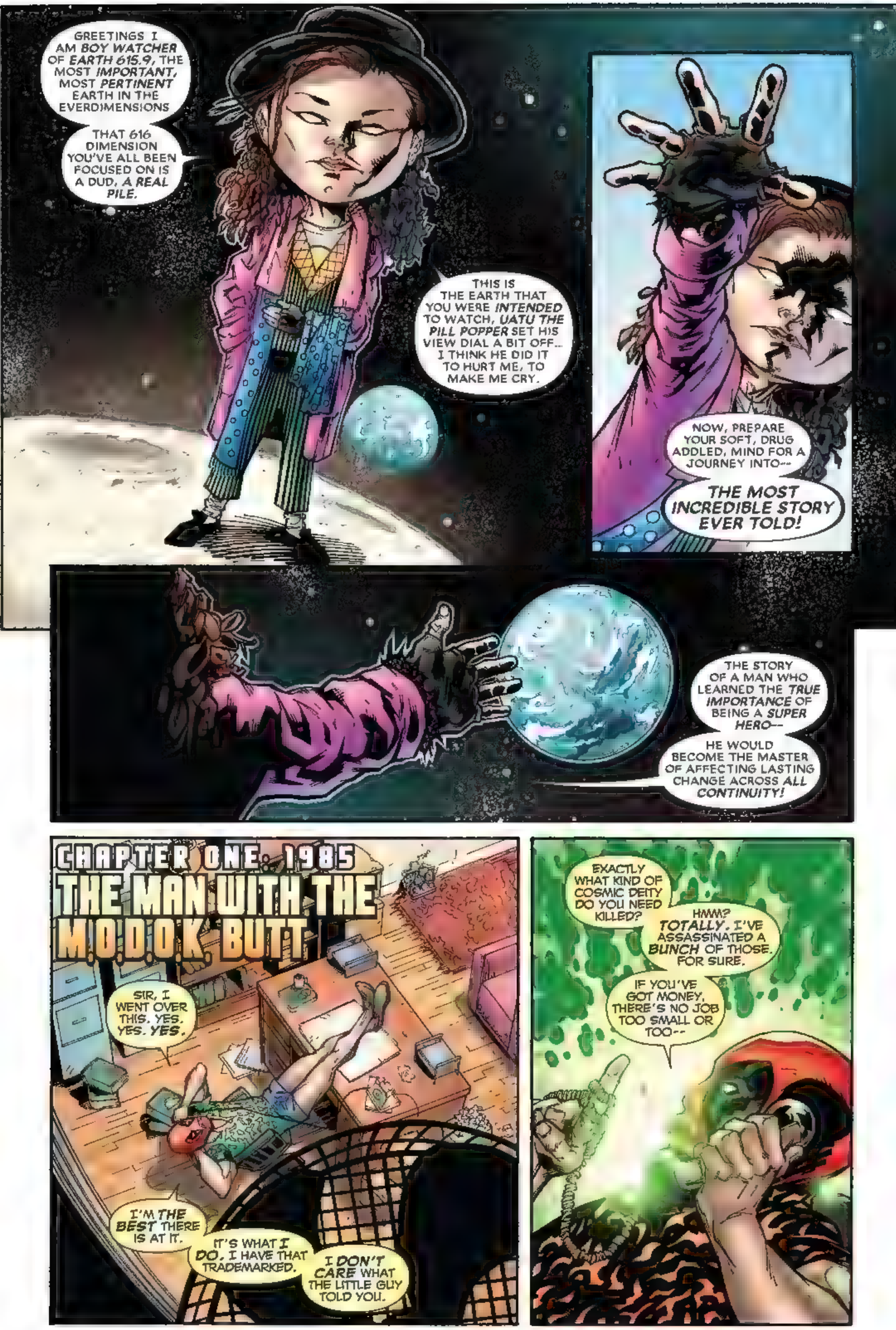
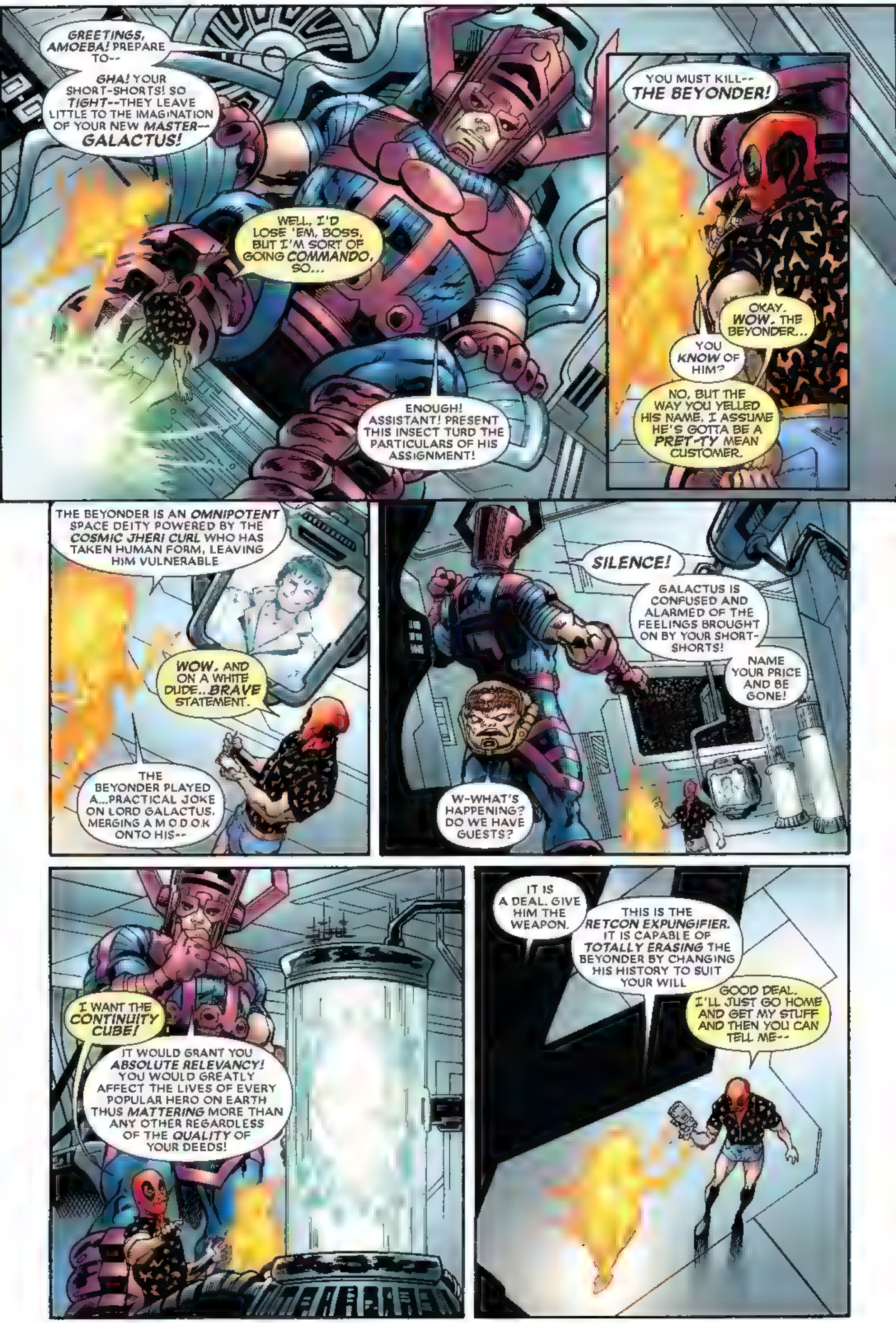
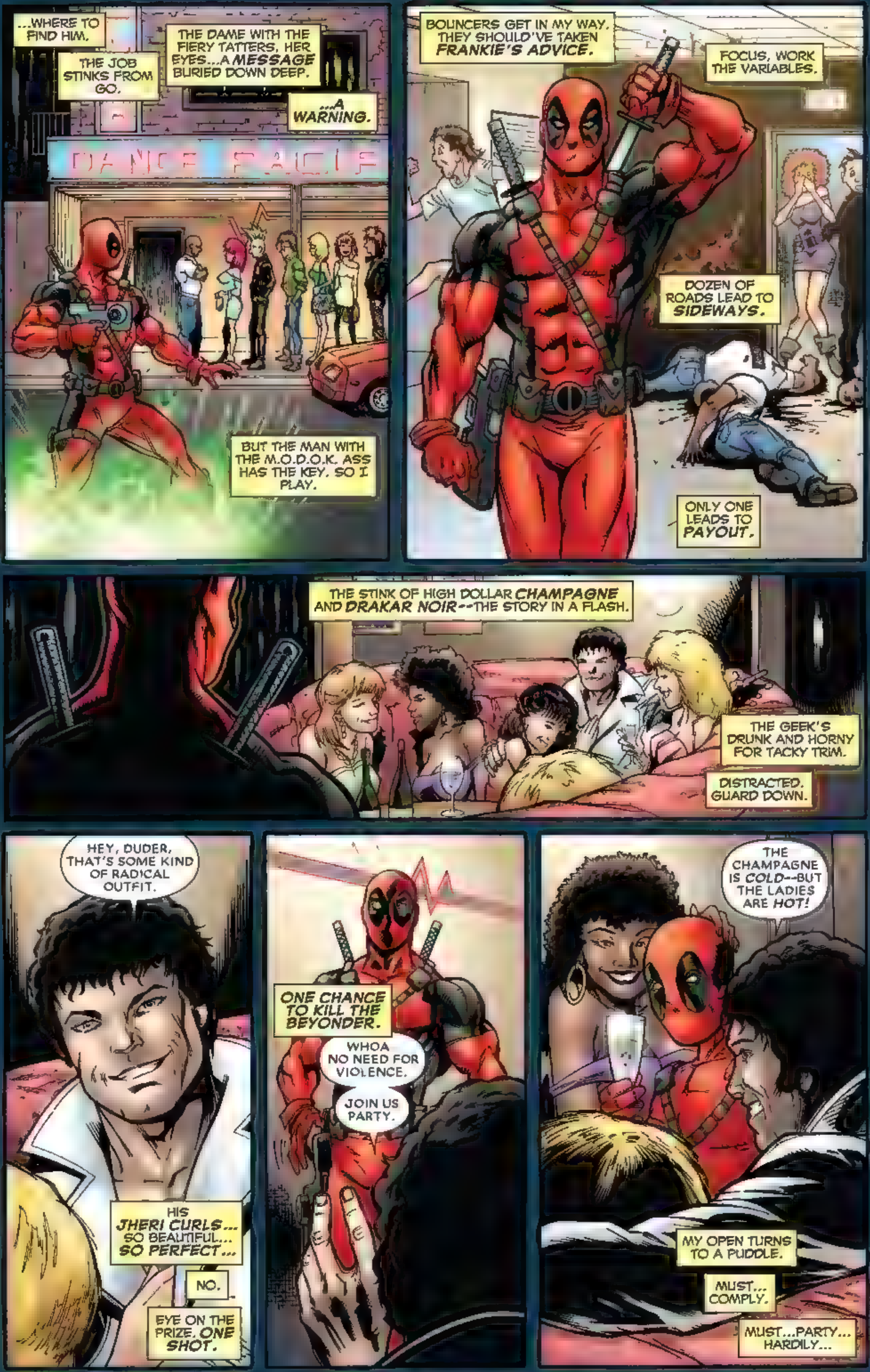
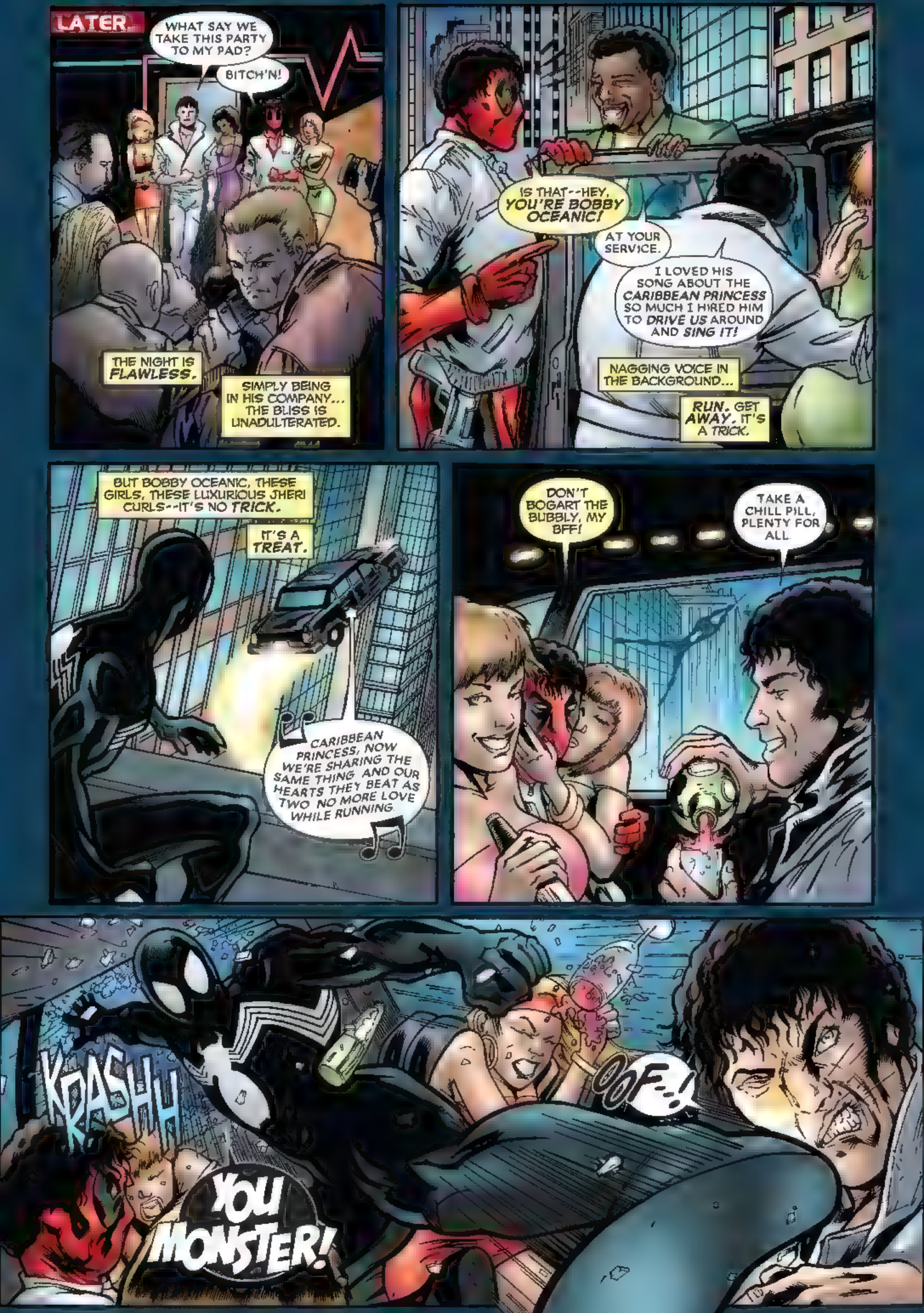
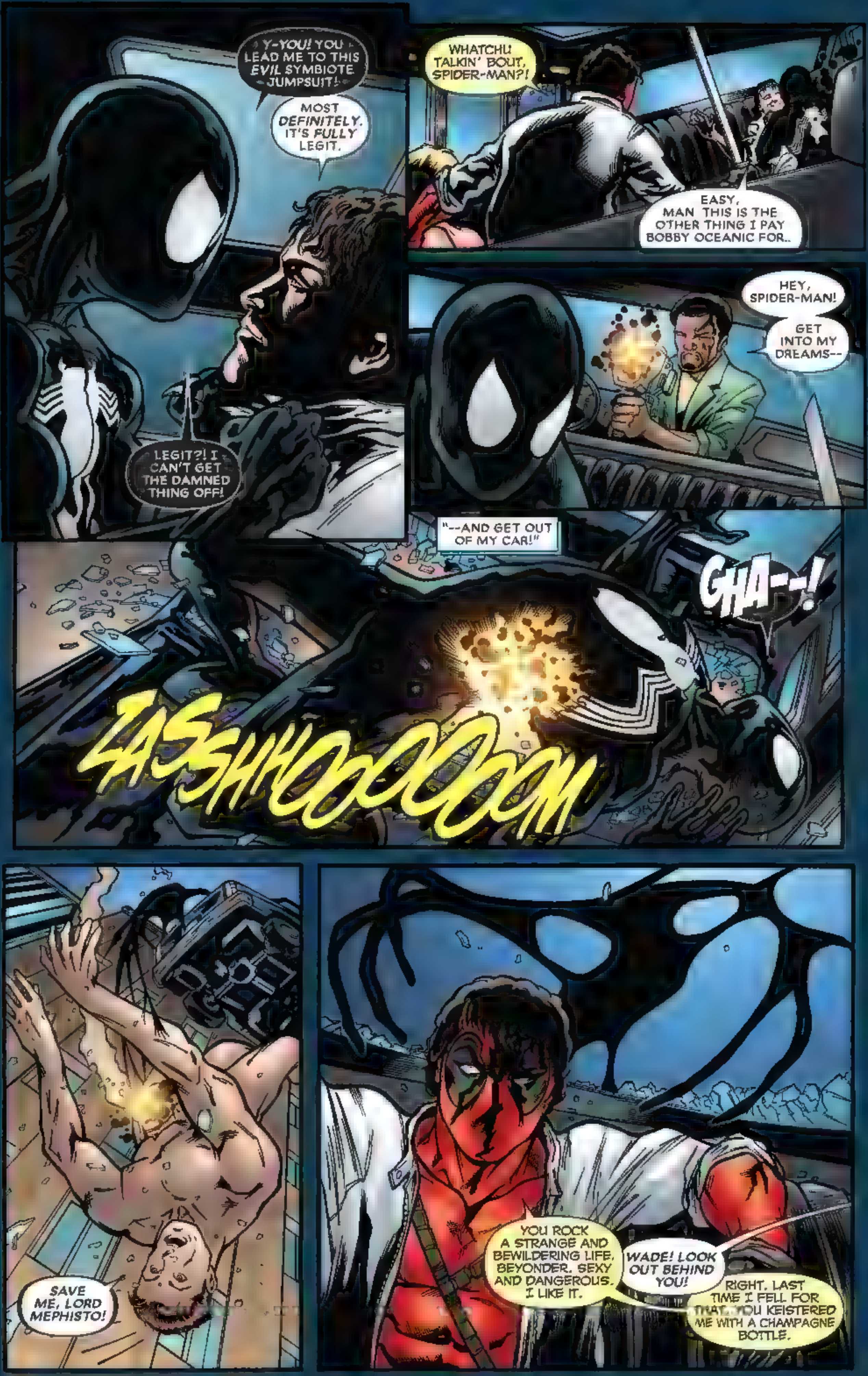
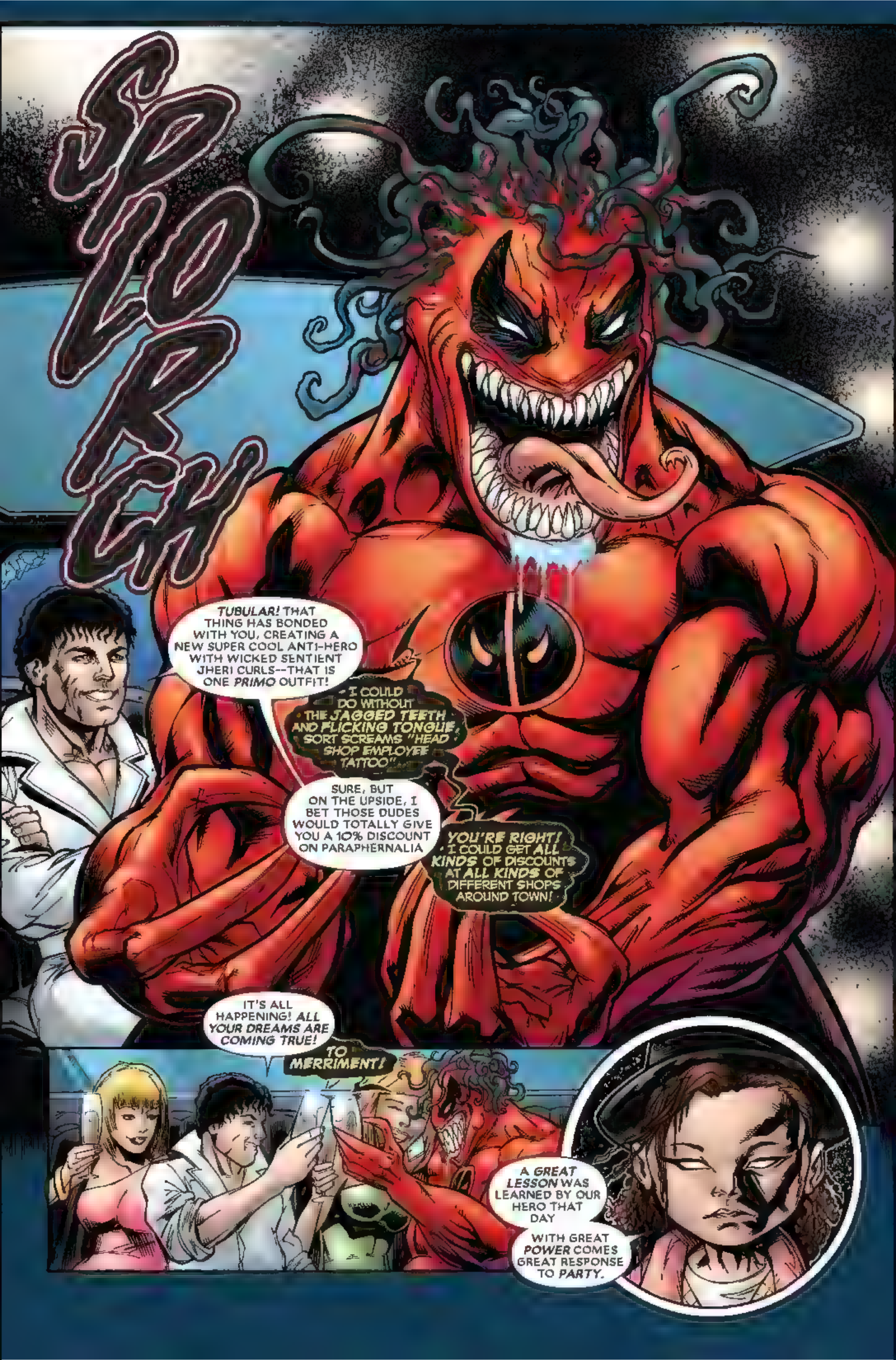

GREETINGS. I AM BOY WATCHER OF EARTH 615.9, THE MOST IMPORTANT, MOST PERTINENT EARTH IN THE EVERDIMENSIONS.
THAT 616 DIMENSION YOU'VE ALL BEEN FOCUSED ON IS A DUD, A REAL PILE.
THIS IS THE EARTH THAT YOU WERE INTENDED TO WATCH. UATU THE PILL POPPER SET HIS VIEW DIAL A BIT OFF... I THINK HE DID IT TO HURT ME, TO MAKE ME CRY.
NOW, PREPARE YOUR SOFT, DRUG ADDLED, MIND FOR A JOURNEY INTO--
THE MOST INCREDIBLE STORY EVER TOLD!
THE STORY OF A MAN WHO LEARNED THE TRUE IMPORTANCE OF BEING A SUPER HERO--
HE WOULD BECOME THE MASTER OF AFFECTING LASTING CHANGE ACROSS ALL CONTINUITY!
CHAPTER ONE: 1985
THE MAN WITH THE M.O.D.O.K. BUTT
SIR, I WENT OVER THIS. YES. YES. YES.
I'M THE BEST THERE IS AT IT.
IT'S WHAT I DO. I HAVE THAT TRADEMARKED.
I DON'T CARE WHAT THE LITTLE GUY TOLD YOU.
EXACTLY WHAT KIND OF COSMIC DEITY DO YOU NEED KILLED?
HMM? TOTALLY. I'VE ASSASSINATED A BUNCH OF THOSE. FOR SURE.
IF YOU'VE GOT MONEY, THERE'S NO JOB TOO SMALL OR TOO--

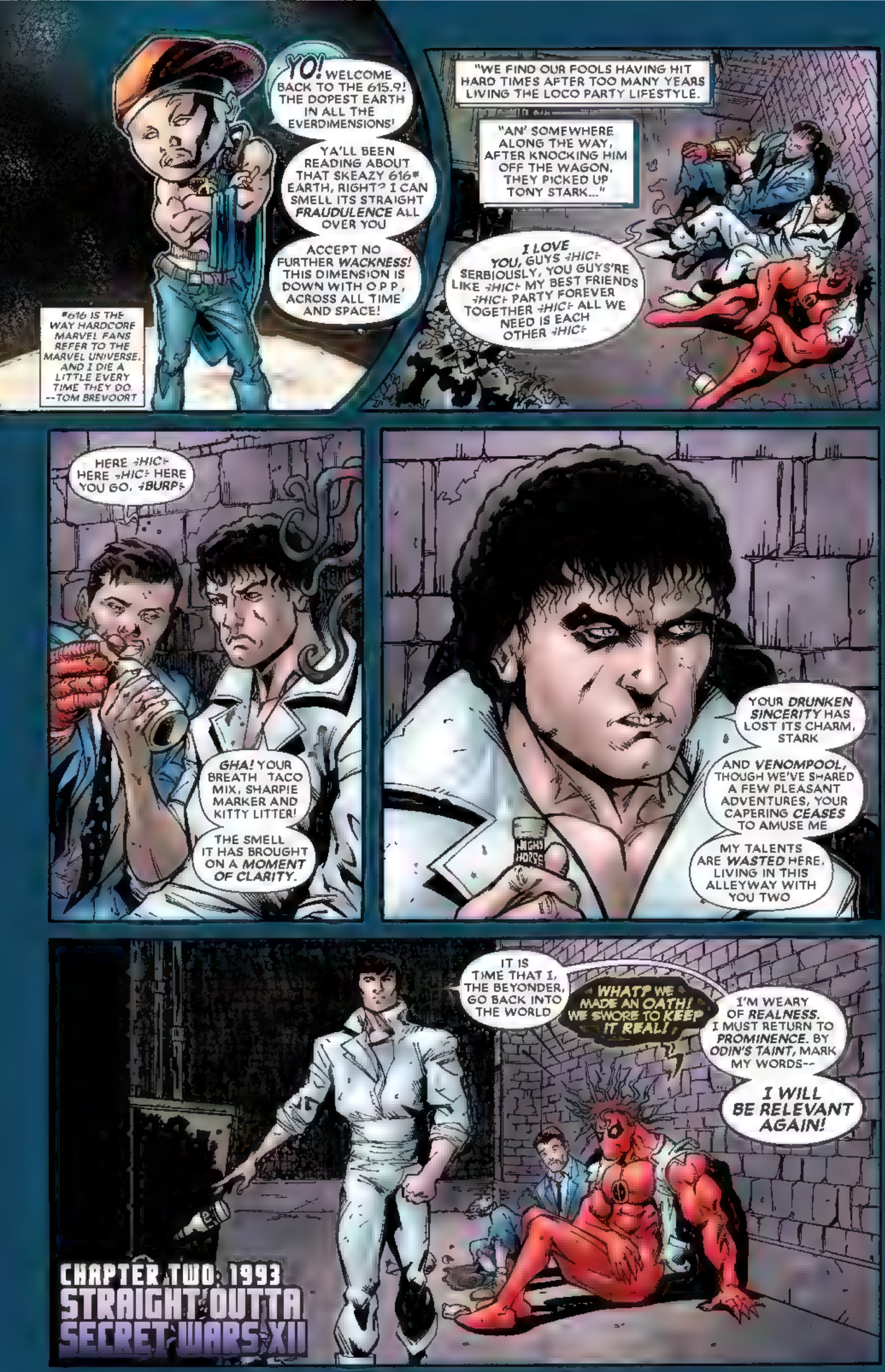

GREETINGS, AMOEBA! PREPARE TO--
GHA! YOUR SHORT-SHORTS! SO TIGHT--THEY LEAVE LITTLE TO THE IMAGINATION OF YOUR NEW MASTER-- GALACTUS!
WELL, I'D LOSE 'EM, BOSS, BUT I'M SORT OF GOING COMMANDO, SO...
ENOUGH! ASSISTANT! PRESENT THIS INSECT TURD THE PARTICULARS OF HIS ASSIGNMENT!
YOU MUST KILL-- THE BEYONDER!
OKAY. WOW. THE BEYONDER...
YOU KNOW OF HIM?
NO, BUT THE WAY YOU YELLED HIS NAME, I ASSUME HE'S GOTTA BE A PRET-TY MEAN CUSTOMER.
THE BEYONDER IS AN OMNIPOTENT SPACE DEITY POWERED BY THE COSMIC JHERI CURL WHO HAS TAKEN HUMAN FORM, LEAVING HIM VULNERABLE
WOW. AND ON A WHITE DUDE...BRAVE STATEMENT.
THE BEYONDER PLAYED A...PRACTICAL JOKE ON LORD GALACTUS, MERGING A M.O.D.O.K ONTO HIS--
SILENCE!
GALACTUS IS CONFUSED AND ALARMED OF THE FEELINGS BROUGHT ON BY YOUR SHORT-SHORTS!
NAME YOUR PRICE AND BE GONE!
W-WHAT'S HAPPENING? DO WE HAVE GUESTS?
I WANT THE CONTINUITY CUBE!
IT WOULD GRANT YOU ABSOLUTE RELEVANCY! YOU WOULD GREATLY AFFECT THE LIVES OF EVERY POPULAR HERO ON EARTH THUS MATTERING MORE THAN ANY OTHER REGARDLESS OF THE QUALITY OF YOUR DEEDS!
IT IS A DEAL. GIVE HIM THE WEAPON.
THIS IS THE RETCON EXPUNGIFIER. IT IS CAPABLE OF TOTALLY ERASING THE BEYONDER BY CHANGING HIS HISTORY TO SUIT YOUR WILL
GOOD DEAL. I'LL JUST GO HOME AND GET MY STUFF AND THEN YOU CAN TELL ME--

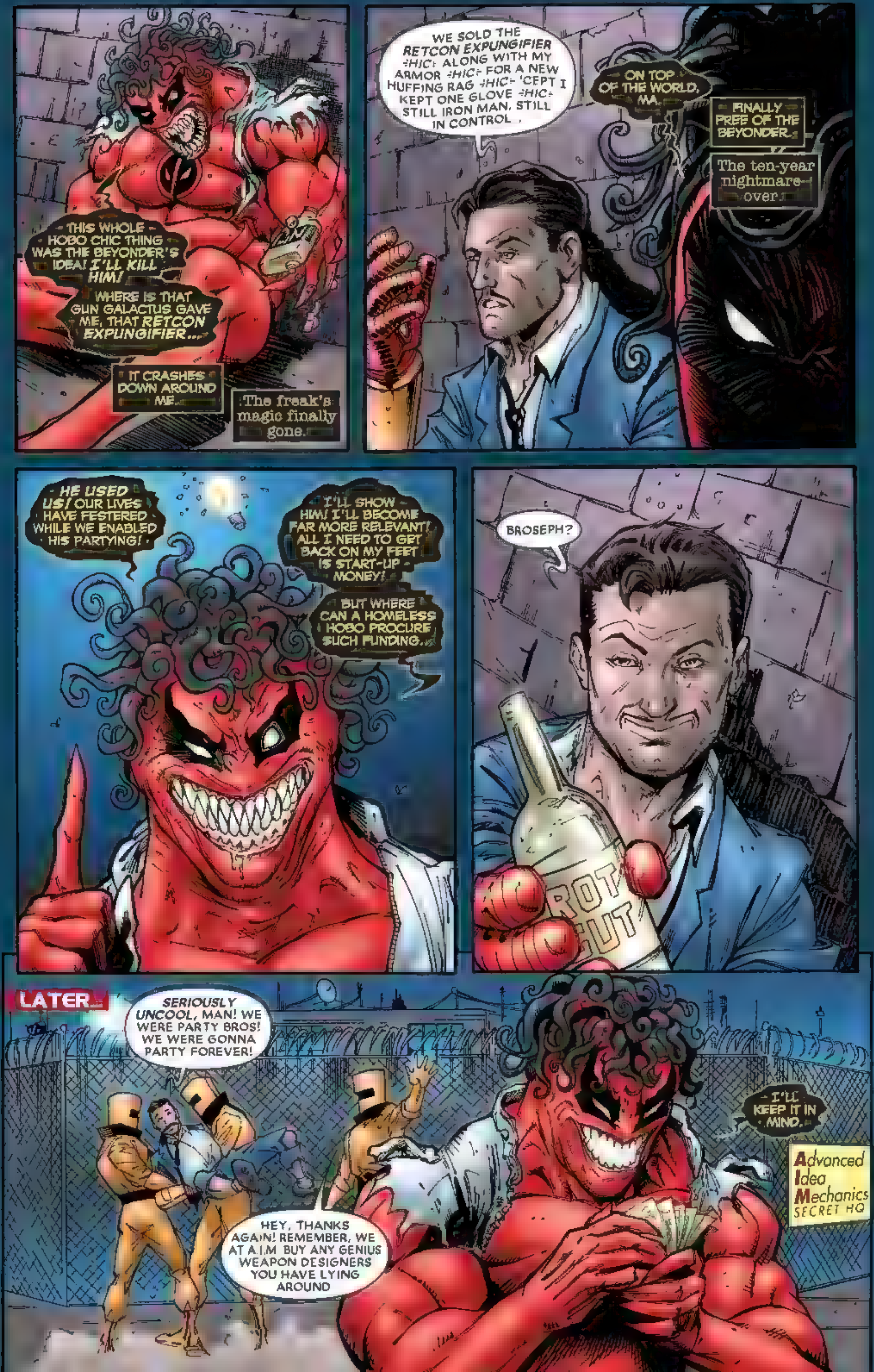

...WHERE TO FIND HIM.
THE JOB STINKS FROM GO.
THE DAME WITH THE FIERY TATTERS, HER EYES...A MESSAGE BURIED DOWN DEEP.
...A WARNING.
BUT THE MAN WITH THE M.O.D.O.K. ASS HAS THE KEY. SO I PLAY.
BOUNCERS GET IN MY WAY. THEY SHOULD'VE TAKEN FRANKIE'S ADVICE.
FOCUS, WORK THE VARIABLES.
DOZEN OF ROADS LEAD TO SIDEWAYS.
ONLY ONE LEADS TO PAYOUT.
THE STINK OF HIGH DOLLAR CHAMPAGNE AND DRAKAR NOIR--THE STORY IN A FLASH.
THE GEEK'S DRUNK AND HORNY FOR TACKY TRIM.
DISTRACTED. GUARD DOWN.
HEY, DUDER, THAT'S SOME KIND OF RADICAL OUTFIT.
HIS JHERI CURLS... SO BEAUTIFUL... SO PERFECT...
NO.
EYE ON THE PRIZE. ONE SHOT.
ONE CHANCE TO KILL THE BEYONDER.
WHOA NO NEED FOR VIOLENCE.
JOIN US PARTY.
THE CHAMPAGNE IS COLD--BUT THE LADIES ARE HOT!
MY OPEN TURNS TO A PUDDLE.
MUST... COMPLY.
MUST...PARTY... HARDILY...

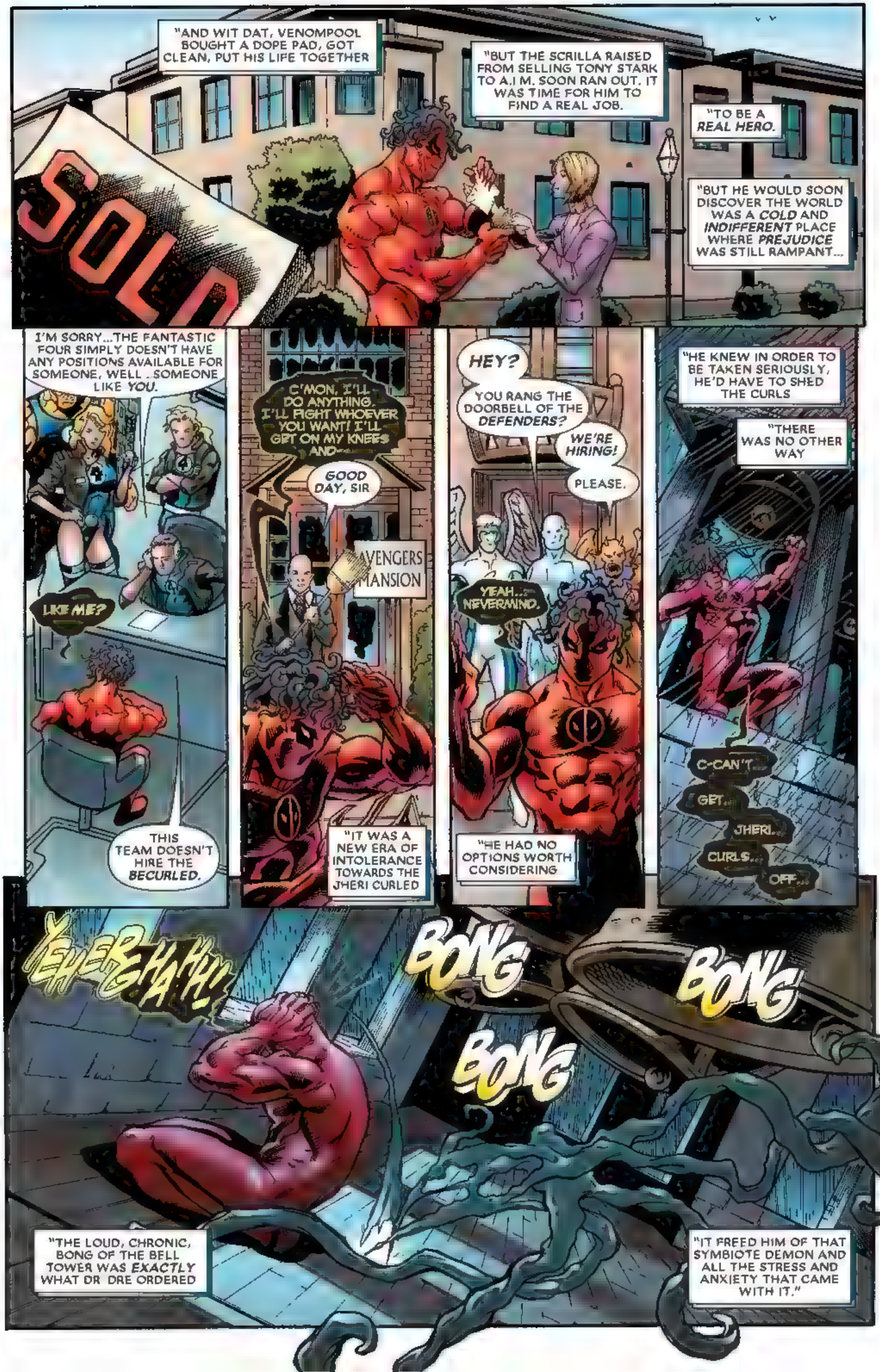

LATER.
WHAT SAY WE TAKE THIS PARTY TO MY PAD?
BITCH'N!
THE NIGHT IS *FLAWLESS.*
SIMPLY BEING IN HIS COMPANY... THE BLISS IS UNADULTERATED.
IS THAT--HEY, *YOU'RE BOBBY OCEANIC!*
AT YOUR SERVICE.
I LOVED HIS SONG ABOUT THE *CARIBBEAN PRINCESS* SO MUCH I HIRED HIM TO *DRIVE US* AROUND AND *SING IT!*
NAGGING VOICE IN THE BACKGROUND...
RUN. GET *AWAY.* IT'S A *TRICK.*
BUT BOBBY OCEANIC, THESE GIRLS, THESE LUXURIOUS JHERI CURLS--IT'S NO *TRICK.*
IT'S A *TREAT.*
CARIBBEAN PRINCESS, NOW WE'RE SHARING THE SAME THING AND OUR HEARTS THEY BEAT AS TWO NO MORE LOVE WHILE RUNNING.
DON'T BOGART THE BUBBLY, MY BFF!
TAKE A CHILL PILL, PLENTY FOR ALL.
KRASHH
OOF--!
YOU MONSTER!

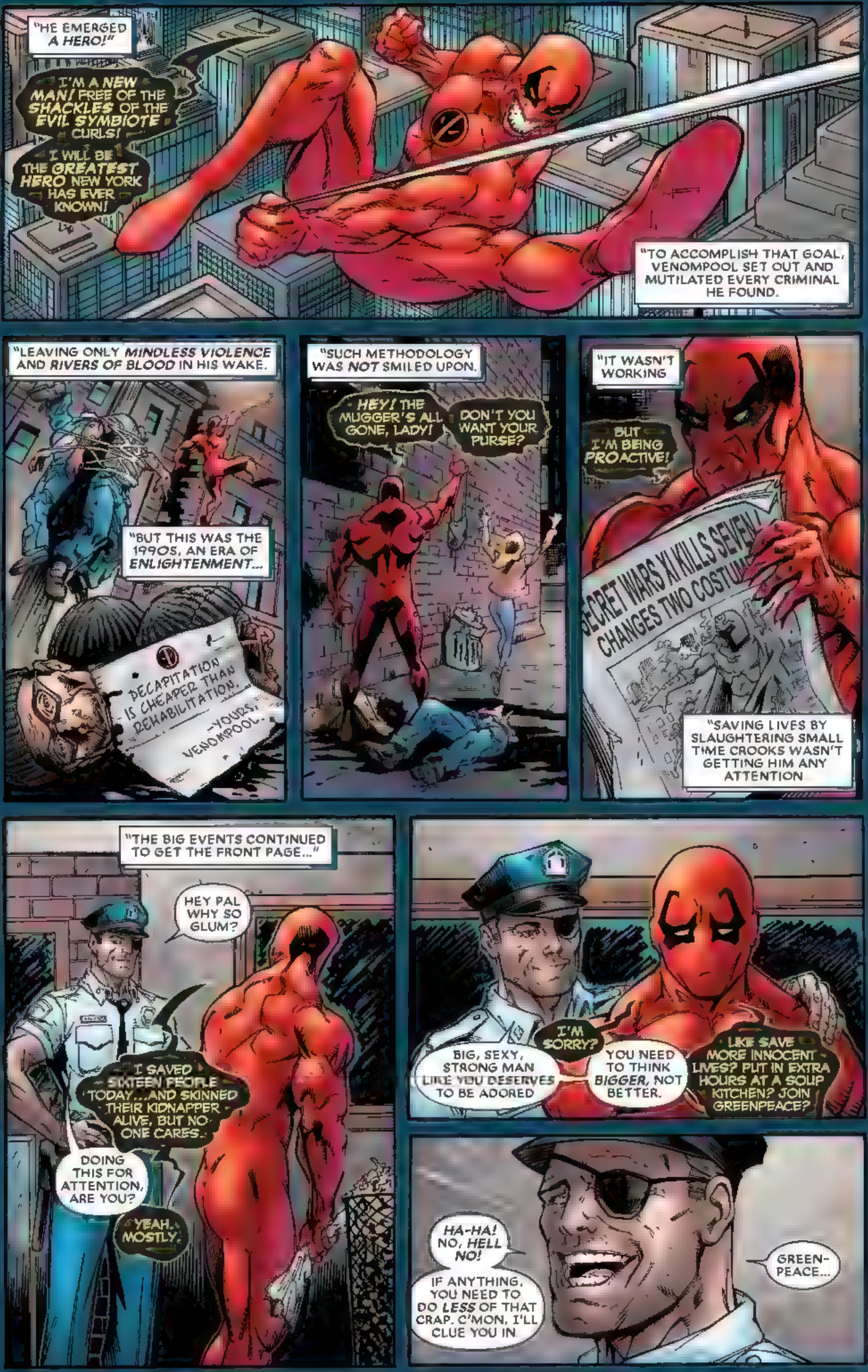

Y-YOU! YOU LEAD ME TO THIS EVIL SYMBIOTE JUMPSUIT!
MOST DEFINITELY. IT'S FULLY LEGIT.
LEGIT?! I CAN'T GET THE DAMNED THING OFF!
WHATCHU TALKIN' BOUT, SPIDER-MAN?!
EASY, MAN THIS IS THE OTHER THING I PAY BOBBY OCEANIC FOR..
HEY, SPIDER-MAN!
GET INTO MY DREAMS--
"--AND GET OUT OF MY CAR!"
GHA--!
ZASSHHOOOOOOM
SAVE ME, LORD MEPHISTO!
YOU ROCK A STRANGE AND BEWILDERING LIFE, BEYONDER. SEXY AND DANGEROUS. I LIKE IT.
WADE! LOOK OUT BEHIND YOU!
RIGHT. LAST TIME I FELL FOR THAT, YOU KEISTERED ME WITH A CHAMPAGNE BOTTLE.

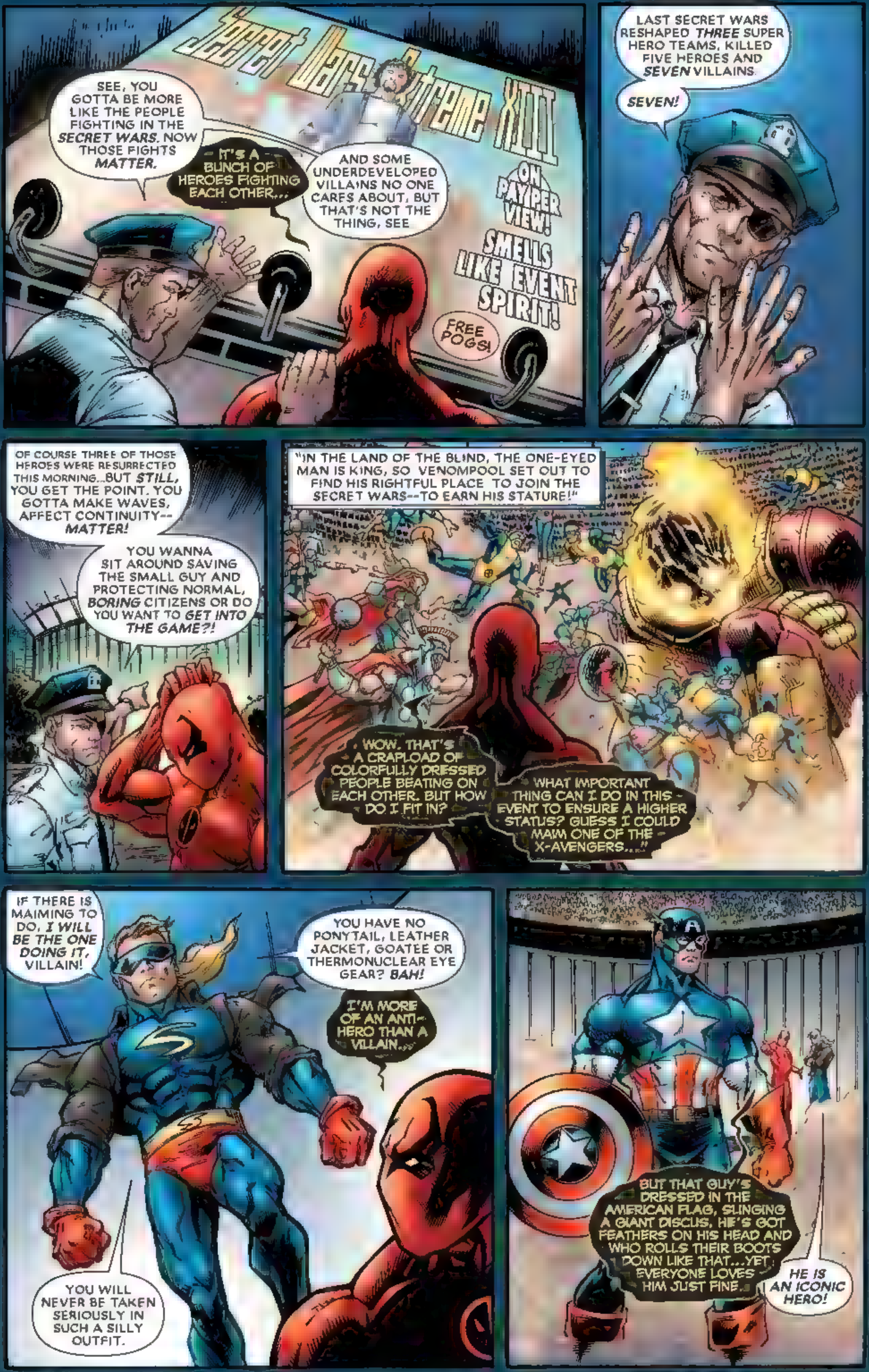

SPLORCH
TUBULAR! THAT THING HAS BONDED WITH YOU, CREATING A NEW SUPER COOL ANTI-HERO WITH WICKED SENTIENT JHERI CURLS--THAT IS ONE PRIMO OUTFIT!
I COULD DO WITHOUT THE JAGGED TEETH AND FLICKING TONGUE. SORT SCREAMS "HEAD SHOP EMPLOYEE TATTOO"...
SURE, BUT ON THE UPSIDE, I BET THOSE DUDES WOULD TOTALLY GIVE YOU A 10% DISCOUNT ON PARAPHERNALIA
YOU'RE RIGHT! I COULD GET ALL KINDS OF DISCOUNTS AT ALL KINDS OF DIFFERENT SHOPS AROUND TOWN!
IT'S ALL HAPPENING! ALL YOUR DREAMS ARE COMING TRUE!
TO MERRIMENT!
A GREAT LESSON WAS LEARNED BY OUR HERO THAT DAY
WITH GREAT POWER COMES GREAT RESPONSE TO PARTY.

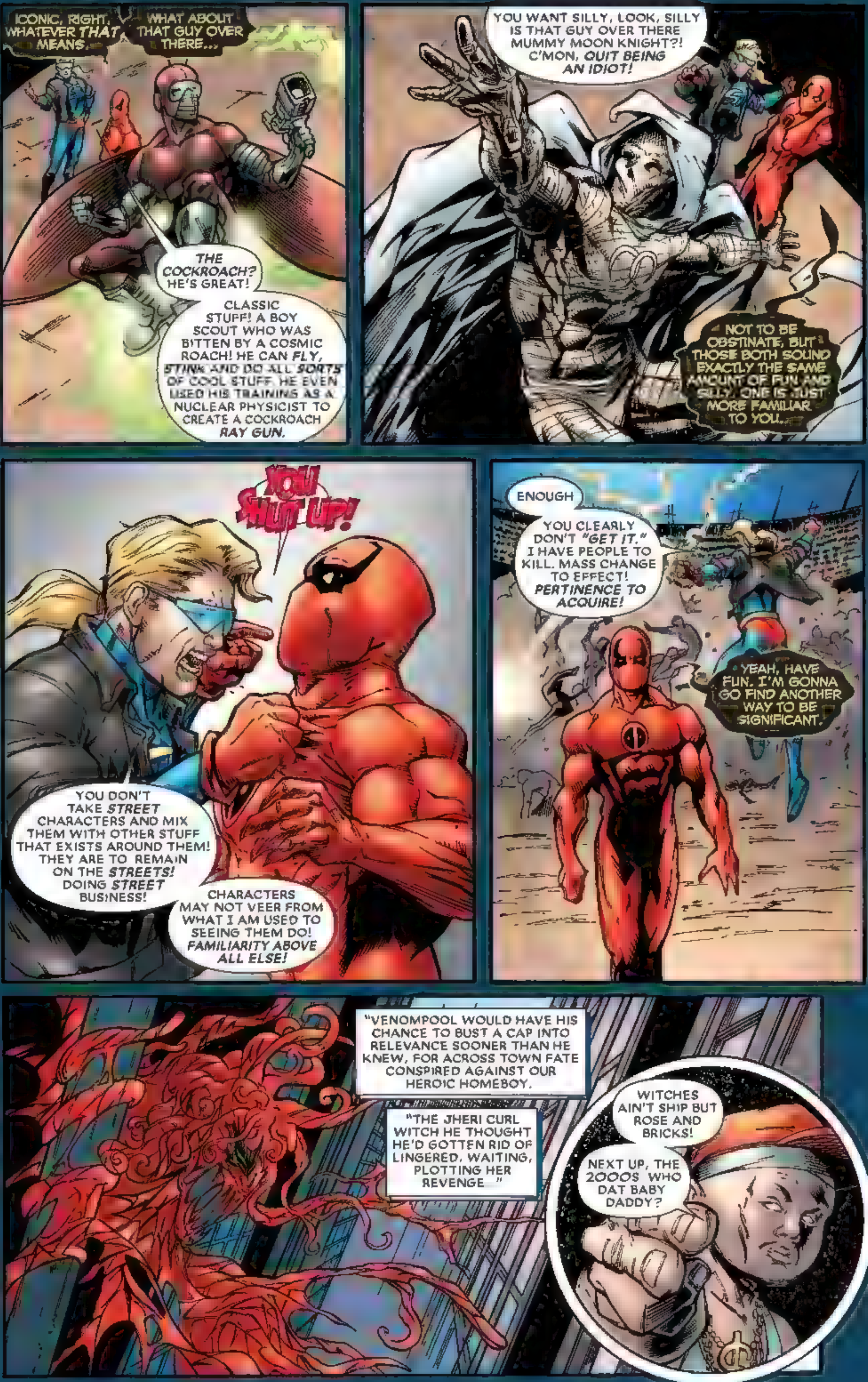

YO! WELCOME BACK TO THE 615.9! THE DOPEST EARTH IN ALL THE EVERDIMENSIONS!
YA'LL BEEN READING ABOUT THAT SKEAZY 616* EARTH, RIGHT? I CAN SMELL ITS STRAIGHT *FRAUDULENCE* ALL OVER YOU
ACCEPT NO FURTHER *WACKNESS!* THIS DIMENSION IS DOWN WITH O.P.P., ACROSS ALL TIME AND SPACE!
*616 IS THE WAY HARDCORE MARVEL FANS REFER TO THE MARVEL UNIVERSE. AND I DIE A LITTLE EVERY TIME THEY DO. --TOM BREVOORT
"WE FIND OUR FOOLS HAVING HIT HARD TIMES AFTER TOO MANY YEARS LIVING THE LOCO PARTY LIFESTYLE.
"AN' SOMEWHERE ALONG THE WAY, AFTER KNOCKING HIM OFF THE WAGON, THEY PICKED UP TONY STARK..."
I LOVE YOU, GUYS ‡HIC‡ SERBIOUSLY, YOU GUYS'RE LIKE ‡HIC‡ MY BEST FRIENDS ‡HIC‡ PARTY FOREVER TOGETHER ‡HIC‡ ALL WE NEED IS EACH OTHER ‡HIC‡
HERE ‡HIC‡ HERE ‡HIC‡ HERE YOU GO. ‡BURP‡
GHA! YOUR BREATH... TACO MIX, SHARPIE MARKER AND KITTY LITTER!
THE SMELL IT HAS BROUGHT ON A *MOMENT OF CLARITY.*
HIGH HORSE
YOUR *DRUNKEN SINCERITY* HAS LOST ITS CHARM, STARK
AND *VENOMPOOL,* THOUGH WE'VE SHARED A FEW PLEASANT ADVENTURES, YOUR CAPERING *CEASES* TO AMUSE ME
MY TALENTS ARE *WASTED* HERE, LIVING IN THIS ALLEYWAY WITH YOU TWO
IT IS TIME THAT I, THE BEYONDER, GO BACK INTO THE WORLD
WHAT? WE MADE AN OATH! WE SWORE TO *KEEP IT REAL!*
I'M WEARY OF *REALNESS.* I MUST RETURN TO *PROMINENCE.* BY *ODIN'S TAINT,* MARK MY WORDS--
I WILL BE RELEVANT AGAIN!
CHAPTER TWO: 1993
STRAIGHT OUTTA SECRET WARS XII

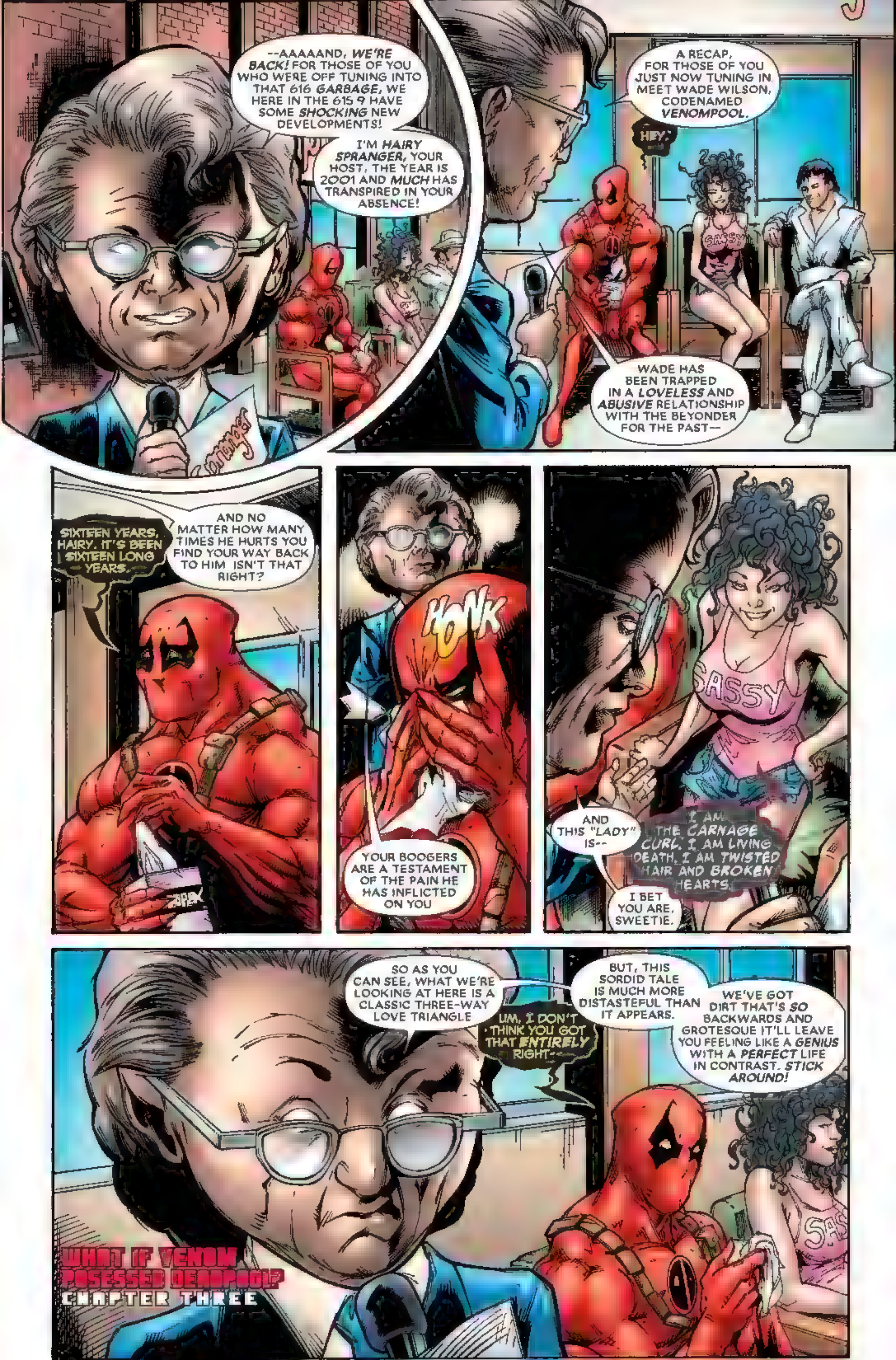

THIS WHOLE HOBO CHIC THING WAS THE BEYONDER'S IDEA! I'LL KILL HIM!
WHERE IS THAT GUN GALACTUS GAVE ME, THAT RETCON EXPUNGIFIER...
IT CRASHES DOWN AROUND ME.
The freak's magic finally gone.
WE SOLD THE RETCON EXPUNGIFIER =HIC= ALONG WITH MY ARMOR =HIC= FOR A NEW HUFFING RAG =HIC= 'CEPT I KEPT ONE GLOVE =HIC= STILL IRON MAN, STILL IN CONTROL.
ON TOP OF THE WORLD, MA.
FINALLY FREE OF THE BEYONDER.
The ten-year nightmare over.
HE USED US! OUR LIVES HAVE FESTERED WHILE WE ENABLED HIS PARTYING!
I'LL SHOW HIM! I'LL BECOME FAR MORE RELEVANT! ALL I NEED TO GET BACK ON MY FEET IS START-UP MONEY!
BUT WHERE CAN A HOMELESS HOBO PROCURE SUCH FUNDING...
BROSEPH?
ROT GUT
LATER...
SERIOUSLY UNCOOL, MAN! WE WERE PARTY BROS! WE WERE GONNA PARTY FOREVER!
I'LL KEEP IT IN MIND.
Advanced Idea Mechanics SECRET HQ
HEY, THANKS AGAIN! REMEMBER, WE AT A.I.M BUY ANY GENIUS WEAPON DESIGNERS YOU HAVE LYING AROUND

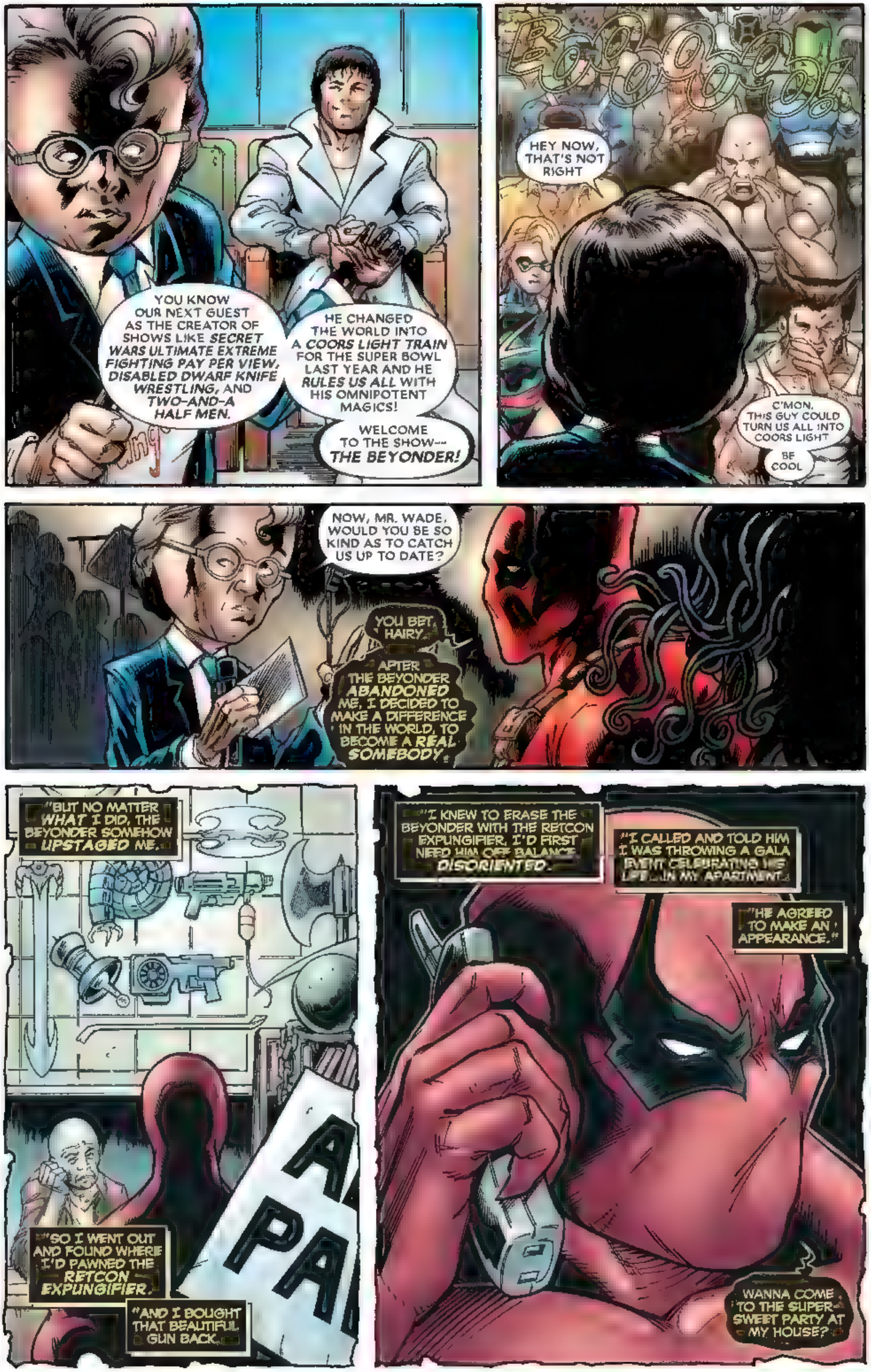

"AND WIT DAT, VENOMPOOL BOUGHT A DOPE PAD, GOT CLEAN, PUT HIS LIFE TOGETHER
SOLD
"BUT THE SCRILLA RAISED FROM SELLING TONY STARK TO A.I.M. SOON RAN OUT. IT WAS TIME FOR HIM TO FIND A REAL JOB.
"TO BE A *REAL HERO.*
"BUT HE WOULD SOON DISCOVER THE WORLD WAS A *COLD* AND *INDIFFERENT* PLACE WHERE *PREJUDICE* WAS STILL RAMPANT...
I'M SORRY...THE FANTASTIC FOUR SIMPLY DOESN'T HAVE ANY POSITIONS AVAILABLE FOR SOMEONE, WELL...SOMEONE LIKE *YOU.*
LIKE ME?
THIS TEAM DOESN'T HIRE THE *BECURLED.*
C'MON, I'LL DO ANYTHING. I'LL FIGHT WHOEVER YOU WANT! I'LL GET ON MY KNEES AND--
GOOD DAY, SIR
AVENGERS MANSION
"IT WAS A NEW ERA OF INTOLERANCE TOWARDS THE JHERI CURLED
HEY?
YOU RANG THE DOORBELL OF THE *DEFENDERS?*
WE'RE HIRING!
PLEASE.
YEAH... NEVERMIND.
"HE HAD NO OPTIONS WORTH CONSIDERING
"HE KNEW IN ORDER TO BE TAKEN SERIOUSLY, HE'D HAVE TO SHED THE CURLS
"THERE WAS NO OTHER WAY
C-CAN'T... GET... JHERI... CURLS... OFF...
YEEHEEGHAHH!!
BONG
BONG
BONG
"THE LOUD, CHRONIC, BONG OF THE BELL TOWER WAS *EXACTLY* WHAT DR. DRE ORDERED
"IT FREED HIM OF THAT SYMBIOTE DEMON AND ALL THE STRESS AND ANXIETY THAT CAME WITH IT."

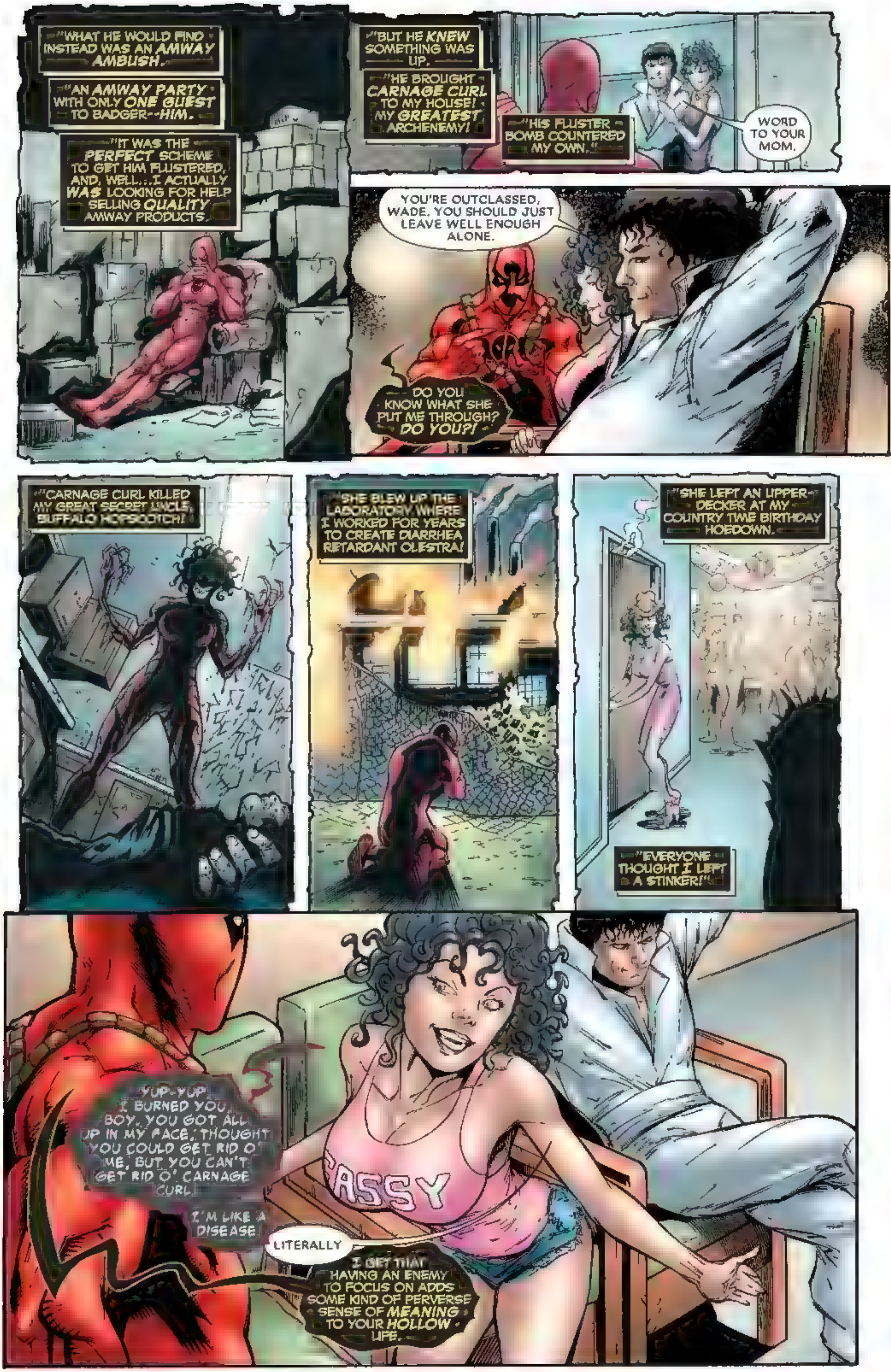

"HE EMERGED A HERO!"
I'M A NEW MAN! FREE OF THE SHACKLES OF THE EVIL SYMBIOTE CURLS!
I WILL BE THE GREATEST HERO NEW YORK HAS EVER KNOWN!
"TO ACCOMPLISH THAT GOAL, VENOMPOOL SET OUT AND MUTILATED EVERY CRIMINAL HE FOUND.
"LEAVING ONLY MINDLESS VIOLENCE AND RIVERS OF BLOOD IN HIS WAKE.
"BUT THIS WAS THE 1990S, AN ERA OF ENLIGHTENMENT...
DECAPITATION IS CHEAPER THAN REHABILITATION. -YOURS, VENOMPOOL.
"SUCH METHODOLOGY WAS NOT SMILED UPON.
HEY! THE MUGGER'S ALL GONE, LADY!
DON'T YOU WANT YOUR PURSE?
"IT WASN'T WORKING
BUT I'M BEING PROACTIVE!
SECRET WARS XI KILLS SEVEN! CHANGES TWO COSTUMES
"SAVING LIVES BY SLAUGHTERING SMALL TIME CROOKS WASN'T GETTING HIM ANY ATTENTION
"THE BIG EVENTS CONTINUED TO GET THE FRONT PAGE..."
HEY PAL WHY SO GLUM?
I SAVED SIXTEEN PEOPLE TODAY... AND SKINNED THEIR KIDNAPPER ALIVE, BUT NO ONE CARES.
DOING THIS FOR ATTENTION, ARE YOU?
YEAH. MOSTLY.
I'M SORRY?
BIG, SEXY, STRONG MAN LIKE YOU DESERVES TO BE ADORED
YOU NEED TO THINK BIGGER, NOT BETTER.
LIKE SAVE MORE INNOCENT LIVES? PUT IN EXTRA HOURS AT A SOUP KITCHEN? JOIN GREENPEACE?
HA-HA! NO, HELL NO!
IF ANYTHING, YOU NEED TO DO LESS OF THAT CRAP. C'MON, I'LL CLUE YOU IN.
GREEN-PEACE...

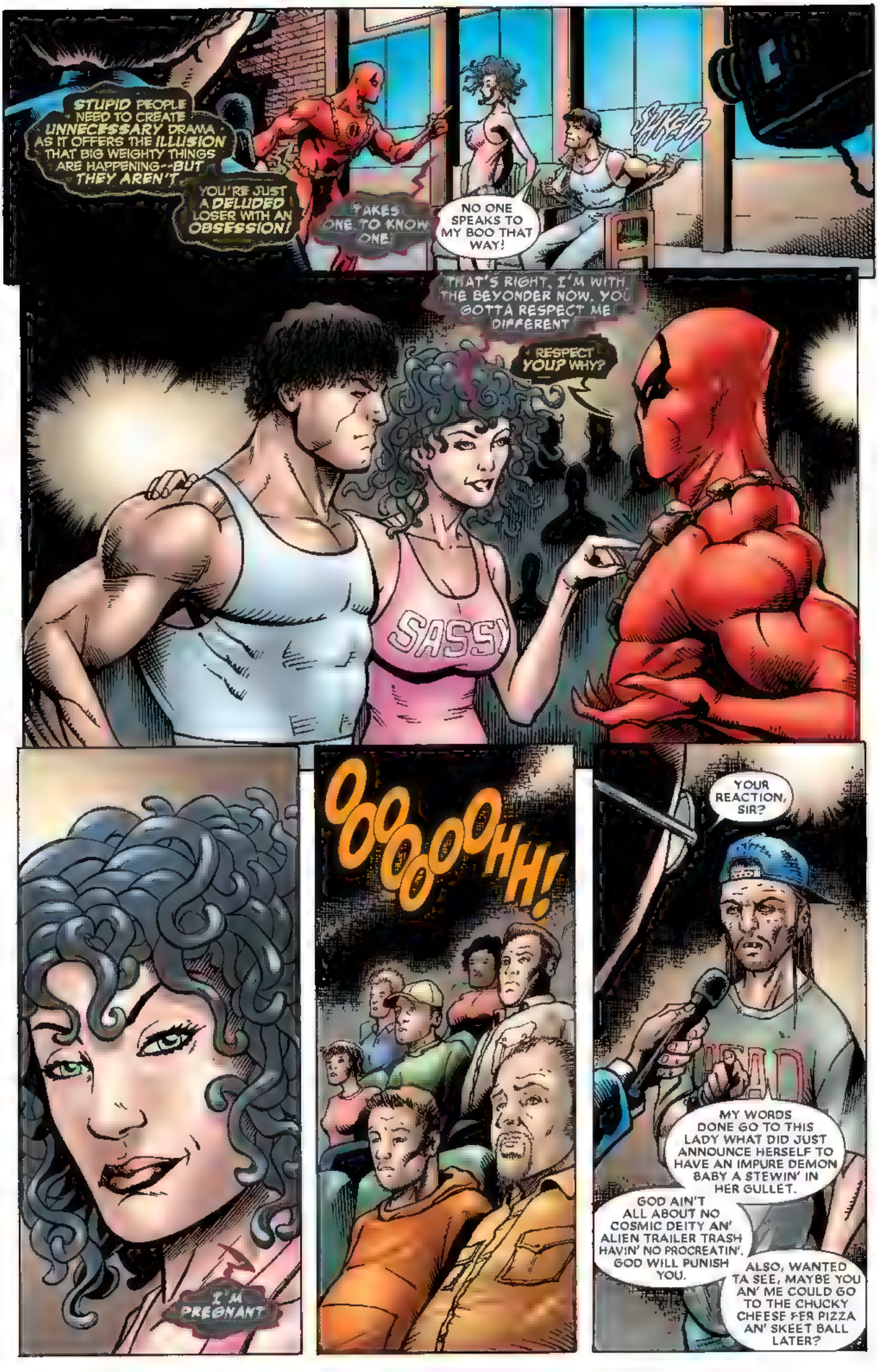

Secret Wars Extreme XIII
ON PAY-PER VIEW!
SMELLS LIKE EVENT SPIRIT!
FREE POGS!
SEE, YOU GOTTA BE MORE LIKE THE PEOPLE FIGHTING IN THE *SECRET WARS*. NOW THOSE FIGHTS *MATTER*.
IT'S A BUNCH OF HEROES FIGHTING EACH OTHER...
AND SOME UNDERDEVELOPED VILLAINS NO ONE CARES ABOUT, BUT THAT'S NOT THE THING, SEE
LAST SECRET WARS RESHAPED *THREE* SUPER HERO TEAMS, KILLED FIVE HEROES AND *SEVEN* VILLAINS.
SEVEN!
OF COURSE THREE OF THOSE HEROES WERE RESURRECTED THIS MORNING...BUT *STILL*, YOU GET THE POINT. YOU GOTTA MAKE WAVES, AFFECT CONTINUITY-- *MATTER!*
YOU WANNA SIT AROUND SAVING THE SMALL GUY AND PROTECTING NORMAL, *BORING* CITIZENS OR DO YOU WANT TO *GET INTO THE GAME?!*
"IN THE LAND OF THE BLIND, THE ONE-EYED MAN IS KING, SO VENOMPOOL SET OUT TO FIND HIS RIGHTFUL PLACE TO JOIN THE SECRET WARS--TO EARN HIS STATURE!"
WOW. THAT'S A CRAPLOAD OF COLORFULLY DRESSED PEOPLE BEATING ON EACH OTHER. BUT HOW DO I FIT IN?
"WHAT IMPORTANT THING CAN I DO IN THIS EVENT TO ENSURE A HIGHER STATUS? GUESS I COULD MAIM ONE OF THE X-AVENGERS..."
IF THERE IS MAIMING TO DO, *I WILL BE THE ONE DOING IT*, VILLAIN!
YOU HAVE NO PONYTAIL, LEATHER JACKET, GOATEE OR THERMONUCLEAR EYE GEAR? *BAH!*
I'M MORE OF AN ANTI-HERO THAN A VILLAIN...
YOU WILL NEVER BE TAKEN SERIOUSLY IN SUCH A SILLY OUTFIT.
BUT THAT GUY'S DRESSED IN THE AMERICAN FLAG, SLINGING A GIANT DISCUS, HE'S GOT FEATHERS ON HIS HEAD AND WHO ROLLS THEIR BOOTS DOWN LIKE THAT...YET, EVERYONE LOVES HIM JUST FINE.
HE IS AN ICONIC HERO!

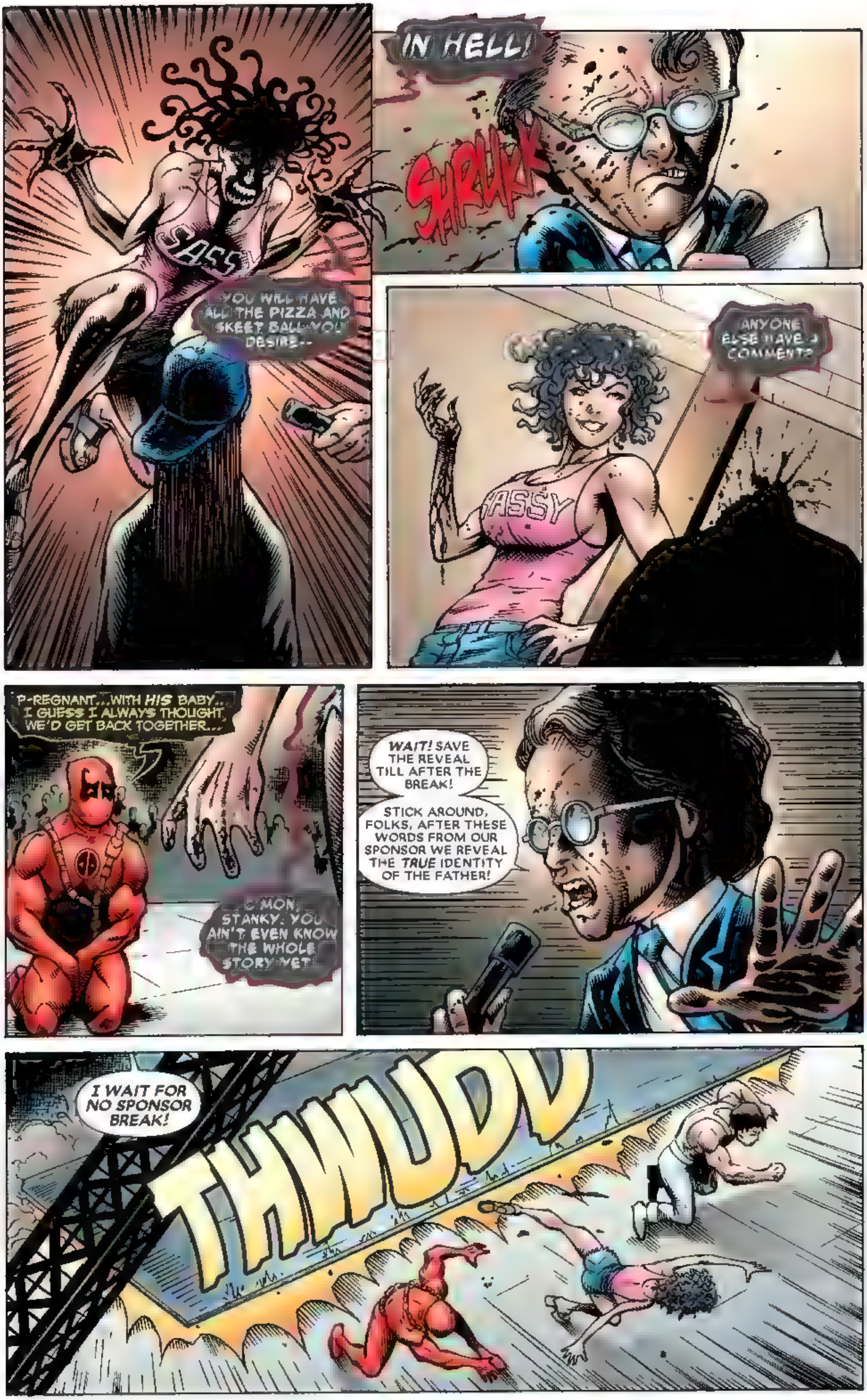

ICONIC, RIGHT, WHATEVER *THAT* MEANS...
WHAT ABOUT THAT GUY OVER THERE...
THE COCKROACH? HE'S GREAT!
CLASSIC STUFF! A BOY SCOUT WHO WAS BITTEN BY A COSMIC ROACH! HE CAN *FLY*, *STINK* AND DO ALL *SORTS* OF COOL STUFF. HE EVEN USED HIS TRAINING AS A NUCLEAR PHYSICIST TO CREATE A COCKROACH *RAY GUN.*
YOU WANT SILLY, LOOK, SILLY IS THAT GUY OVER THERE MUMMY MOON KNIGHT?! C'MON, *QUIT BEING AN IDIOT!*
NOT TO BE OBSTINATE, BUT THOSE BOTH SOUND EXACTLY THE SAME AMOUNT OF FUN AND SILLY. ONE IS JUST MORE FAMILIAR TO YOU...
YOU SHUT UP!
YOU DON'T TAKE *STREET* CHARACTERS AND MIX THEM WITH OTHER STUFF THAT EXISTS AROUND THEM! THEY ARE TO REMAIN ON THE *STREETS!* DOING *STREET* BUSINESS!
CHARACTERS MAY NOT VEER FROM WHAT I AM USED TO SEEING THEM DO! *FAMILIARITY ABOVE ALL ELSE!*
ENOUGH
YOU CLEARLY DON'T *"GET IT."* I HAVE PEOPLE TO KILL. MASS CHANGE TO EFFECT! *PERTINENCE TO ACQUIRE!*
YEAH, HAVE FUN. I'M GONNA GO FIND ANOTHER WAY TO BE SIGNIFICANT.
"VENOMPOOL WOULD HAVE HIS CHANCE TO BUST A CAP INTO RELEVANCE SOONER THAN HE KNEW, FOR ACROSS TOWN FATE CONSPIRED AGAINST OUR HEROIC HOMEBOY.
"THE JHERI CURL WITCH HE THOUGHT HE'D GOTTEN RID OF LINGERED, WAITING, PLOTTING HER REVENGE..."
WITCHES AIN'T SHIP BUT ROSE AND BRICKS!
NEXT UP, THE 2000S WHO DAT BABY DADDY?

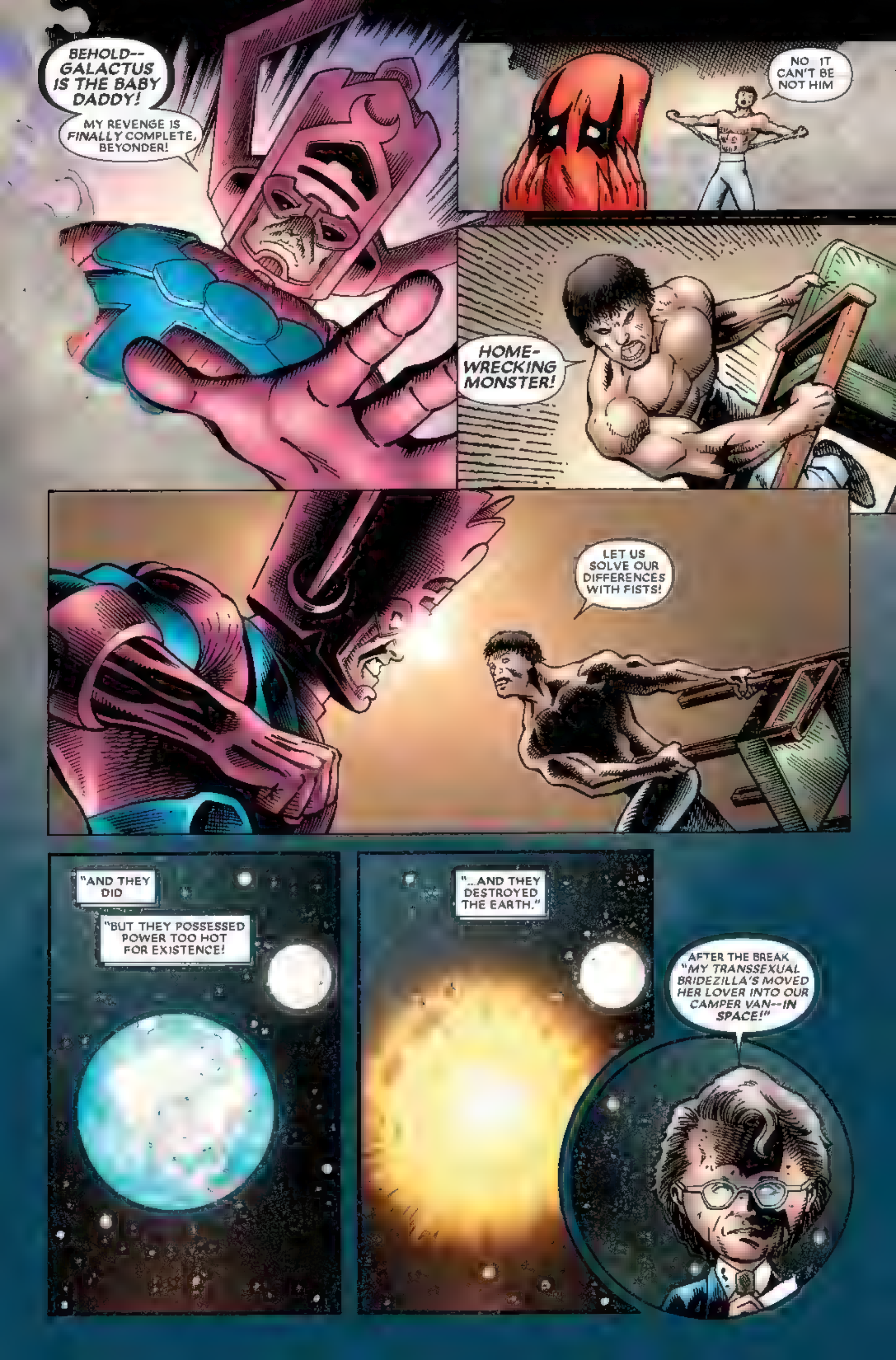

--AAAAAND, *WE'RE BACK!* FOR THOSE OF YOU WHO WERE OFF TUNING INTO THAT 616 *GARBAGE*, WE HERE IN THE 615 9 HAVE SOME *SHOCKING* NEW DEVELOPMENTS!
I'M *HAIRY SPRANGER*, YOUR HOST, THE YEAR IS 2001 AND *MUCH* HAS TRANSPIRED IN YOUR ABSENCE!
A RECAP, FOR THOSE OF YOU JUST NOW TUNING IN, MEET WADE WILSON, CODENAMED *VENOMPOOL*.
HEY!
WADE HAS BEEN TRAPPED IN A *LOVELESS* AND *ABUSIVE* RELATIONSHIP WITH THE BEYONDER FOR THE PAST--
SIXTEEN YEARS, HAIRY. IT'S BEEN SIXTEEN LONG YEARS.
AND NO MATTER HOW MANY TIMES HE HURTS YOU FIND YOUR WAY BACK TO HIM. ISN'T THAT RIGHT?
HONK
YOUR BOOGERS ARE A TESTAMENT OF THE PAIN HE HAS INFLICTED ON YOU
AND THIS "LADY" IS--
I AM THE *CARNAGE CURL*. I AM *LIVING DEATH*. I AM *TWISTED HAIR* AND *BROKEN HEARTS*.
I BET YOU ARE, SWEETIE.
SO AS YOU CAN SEE, WHAT WE'RE LOOKING AT HERE IS A CLASSIC THREE-WAY LOVE TRIANGLE
UM, I DON'T THINK YOU GOT THAT *ENTIRELY* RIGHT--
BUT, THIS SORDID TALE IS MUCH MORE DISTASTEFUL THAN IT APPEARS.
WE'VE GOT DIRT THAT'S *SO* BACKWARDS AND GROTESQUE IT'LL LEAVE YOU FEELING LIKE A *GENIUS* WITH A *PERFECT* LIFE IN CONTRAST. *STICK AROUND!*
WHAT IF VENOM POSESSED DEADPOOL?
CHAPTER THREE

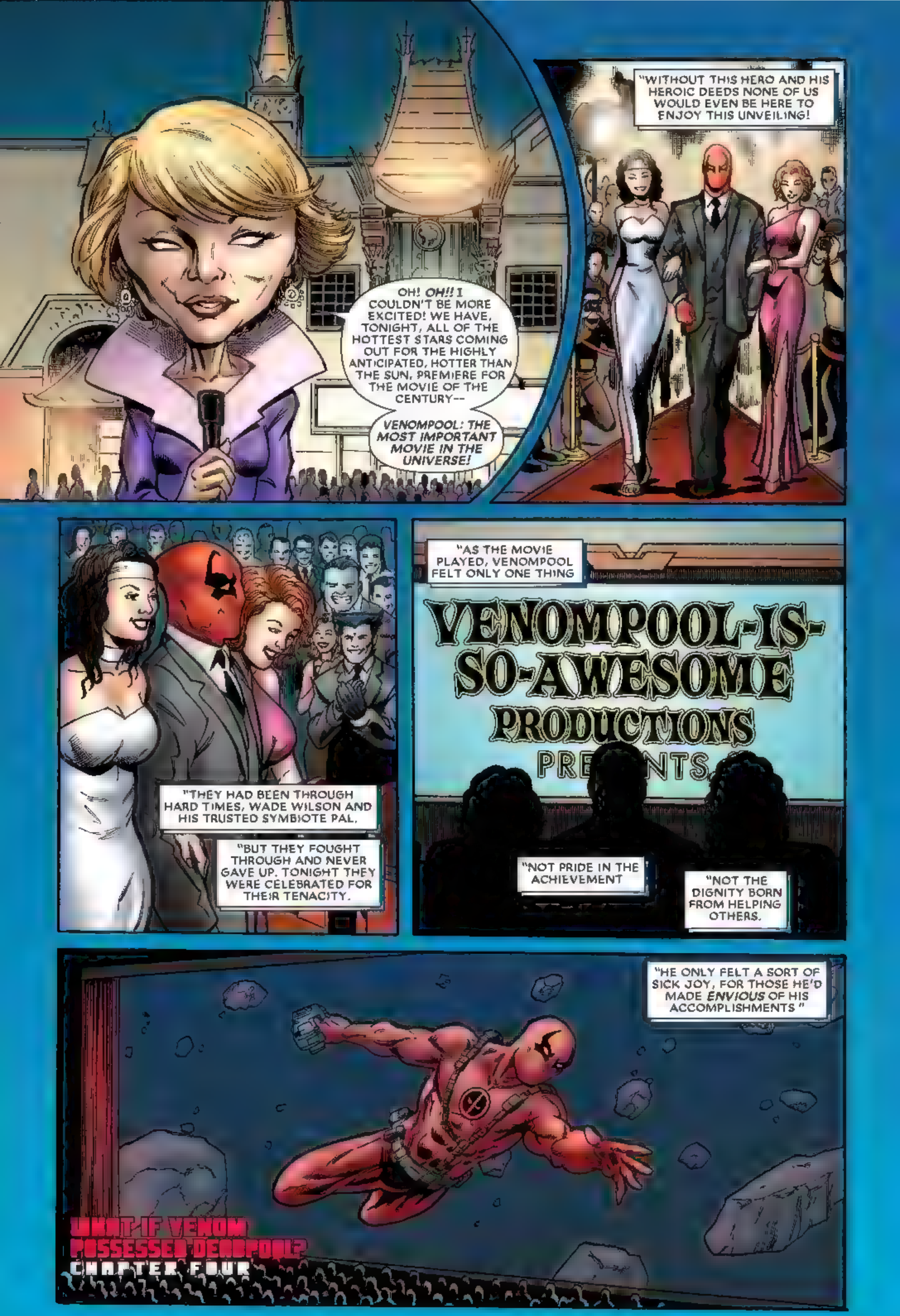

YOU KNOW OUR NEXT GUEST AS THE CREATOR OF SHOWS LIKE *SECRET WARS ULTIMATE EXTREME FIGHTING PAY PER VIEW, DISABLED DWARF KNIFE WRESTLING,* AND *TWO-AND-A HALF MEN.*
HE CHANGED THE WORLD INTO A *COORS LIGHT TRAIN* FOR THE SUPER BOWL LAST YEAR AND HE *RULES US ALL* WITH HIS OMNIPOTENT MAGICS!
WELCOME TO THE SHOW-- *THE BEYONDER!*
BOOOOOOOO!
HEY NOW, THAT'S NOT RIGHT
C'MON, THIS GUY COULD TURN US ALL INTO COORS LIGHT
BE COOL
NOW, MR. WADE, WOULD YOU BE SO KIND AS TO CATCH US UP TO DATE?
YOU BET, HAIRY.
AFTER THE BEYONDER *ABANDONED* ME, I DECIDED TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE IN THE WORLD, TO BECOME A *REAL SOMEBODY.*
"BUT NO MATTER *WHAT* I DID, THE BEYONDER SOMEHOW *UPSTAGED* ME.
"SO I WENT OUT AND FOUND WHERE I'D PAWNED THE *RETCON EXPUNGIFIER.*
"AND I BOUGHT THAT BEAUTIFUL GUN BACK.
"I KNEW TO ERASE THE BEYONDER WITH THE RETCON EXPUNGIFIER, I'D FIRST NEED HIM OFF BALANCE. *DISORIENTED.*
"I CALLED AND TOLD HIM I WAS THROWING A GALA EVENT CELEBRATING HIS LIFE... IN MY APARTMENT.
"HE AGREED TO MAKE AN APPEARANCE."
WANNA COME TO THE SUPER SWEET PARTY AT MY HOUSE?

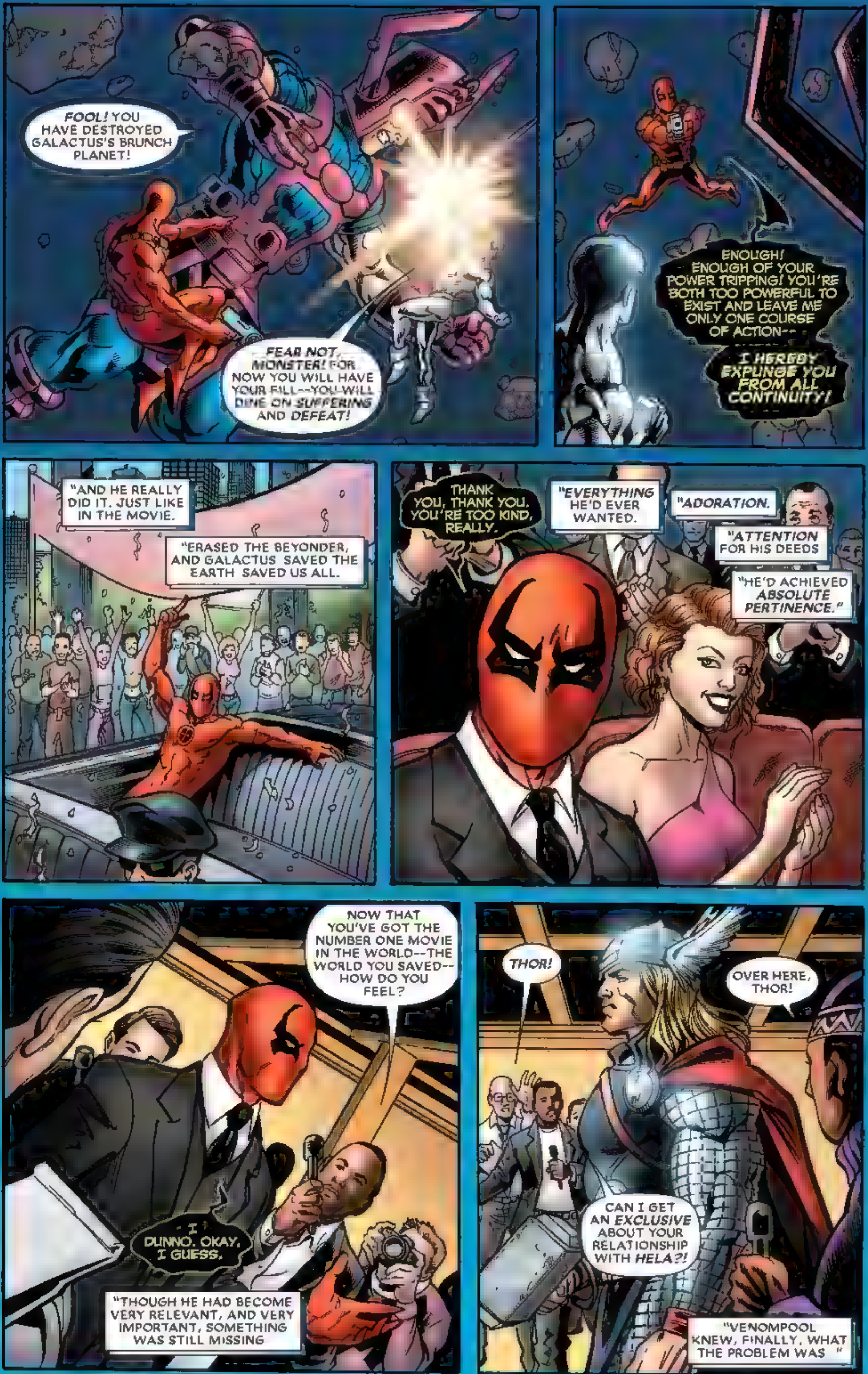

"WHAT HE WOULD FIND INSTEAD WAS AN AMWAY AMBUSH.
"AN AMWAY PARTY WITH ONLY ONE GUEST TO BADGER--HIM.
"IT WAS THE PERFECT SCHEME TO GET HIM FLUSTERED, AND, WELL... I ACTUALLY WAS LOOKING FOR HELP SELLING QUALITY AMWAY PRODUCTS.
"BUT HE KNEW SOMETHING WAS UP.
"HE BROUGHT CARNAGE CURL TO MY HOUSE! MY GREATEST ARCHENEMY!
"HIS FLUSTER BOMB COUNTERED MY OWN."
WORD TO YOUR MOM.
YOU'RE OUTCLASSED, WADE. YOU SHOULD JUST LEAVE WELL ENOUGH ALONE.
DO YOU KNOW WHAT SHE PUT ME THROUGH? DO YOU?!
"CARNAGE CURL KILLED MY GREAT SECRET UNCLE, BUFFALO HOPSCOTCH!
"SHE BLEW UP THE LABORATORY WHERE I WORKED FOR YEARS TO CREATE DIARRHEA RETARDANT OLESTRA!
"SHE LEFT AN UPPER-DECKER AT MY COUNTRY TIME BIRTHDAY HOEDOWN.
"EVERYONE THOUGHT I LEFT A STINKER!"
YUP-YUP! I BURNED YOU, BOY. YOU GOT ALL UP IN MY FACE, THOUGHT YOU COULD GET RID O' ME, BUT YOU CAN'T GET RID O' CARNAGE CURL.
I'M LIKE A DISEASE.
ASSY
LITERALLY.
I GET THAT HAVING AN ENEMY TO FOCUS ON ADDS SOME KIND OF PERVERSE SENSE OF MEANING TO YOUR HOLLOW LIFE.

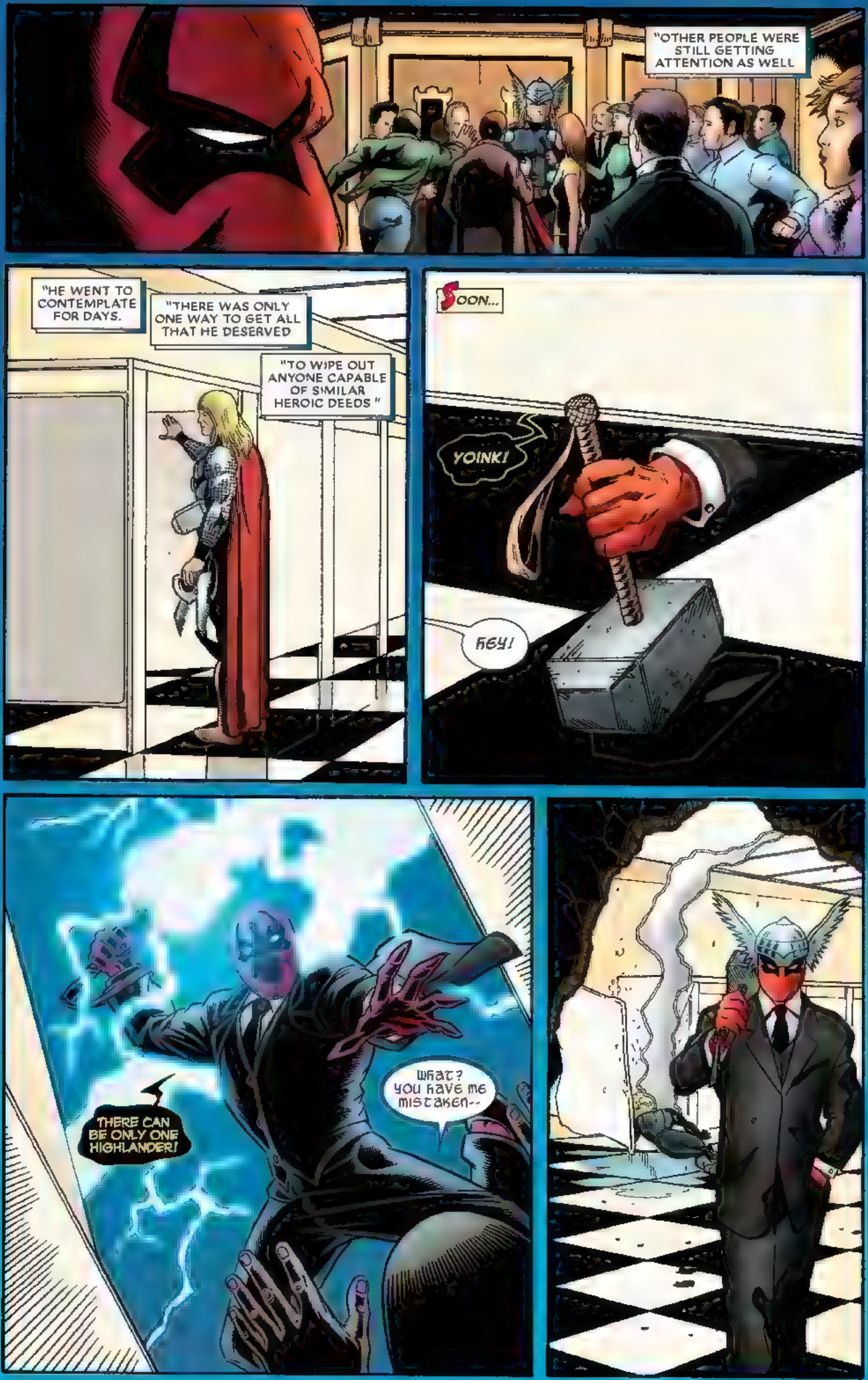

STUPID PEOPLE NEED TO CREATE UNNECESSARY DRAMA AS IT OFFERS THE ILLUSION THAT BIG WEIGHTY THINGS ARE HAPPENING--BUT THEY AREN'T.
YOU'RE JUST A DELUDED LOSER WITH AN OBSESSION!
TAKES ONE TO KNOW ONE.
NO ONE SPEAKS TO MY BOO THAT WAY!
THAT'S RIGHT. I'M WITH THE BEYONDER NOW. YOU GOTTA RESPECT ME DIFFERENT.
RESPECT YOU? WHY?
SASSY
I'M PREGNANT.
OOOOOOOHH!
YOUR REACTION, SIR?
MY WORDS DONE GO TO THIS LADY WHAT DID JUST ANNOUNCE HERSELF TO HAVE AN IMPURE DEMON BABY A STEWIN' IN HER GULLET.
GOD AIN'T ALL ABOUT NO COSMIC DEITY AN' ALIEN TRAILER TRASH HAVIN' NO PROCREATIN'. GOD WILL PUNISH YOU.
ALSO, WANTED TA SEE, MAYBE YOU AN' ME COULD GO TO THE CHUCKY CHEESE FER PIZZA AN' SKEET BALL LATER?

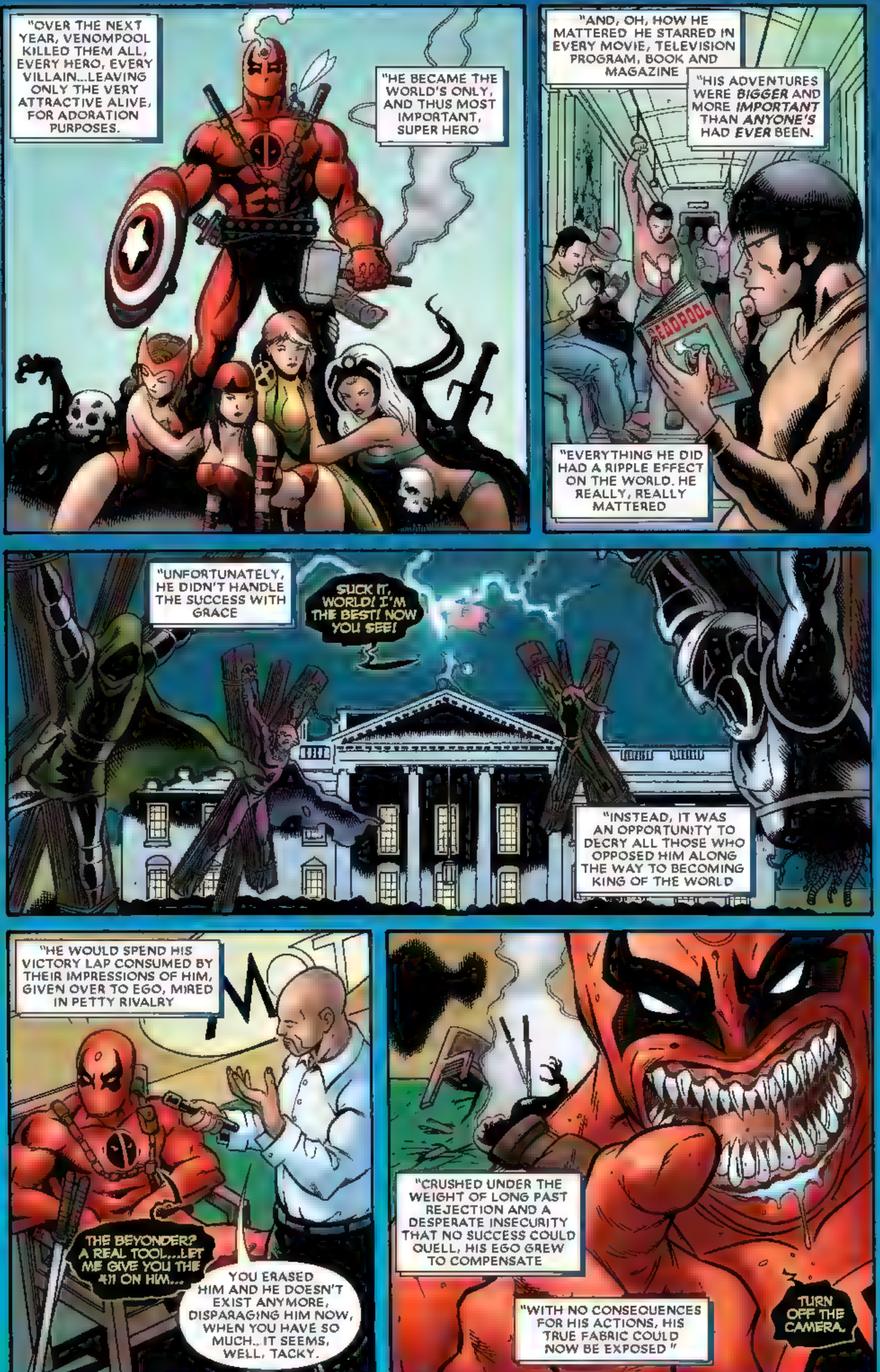

SASSY
YOU WILL HAVE ALL THE PIZZA AND SKEET BALL YOU DESIRE--
IN HELL!
SHRUKK
ANYONE ELSE HAVE A COMMENT?
SASSY
P-REGNANT...WITH *HIS* BABY... I GUESS I ALWAYS THOUGHT WE'D GET BACK TOGETHER...
C'MON, STANKY. YOU AIN'T EVEN KNOW THE WHOLE STORY YET!
WAIT! SAVE THE REVEAL TILL AFTER THE BREAK!
STICK AROUND, FOLKS, AFTER THESE WORDS FROM OUR SPONSOR WE REVEAL THE *TRUE* IDENTITY OF THE FATHER!
I WAIT FOR NO SPONSOR BREAK!
THWUDD

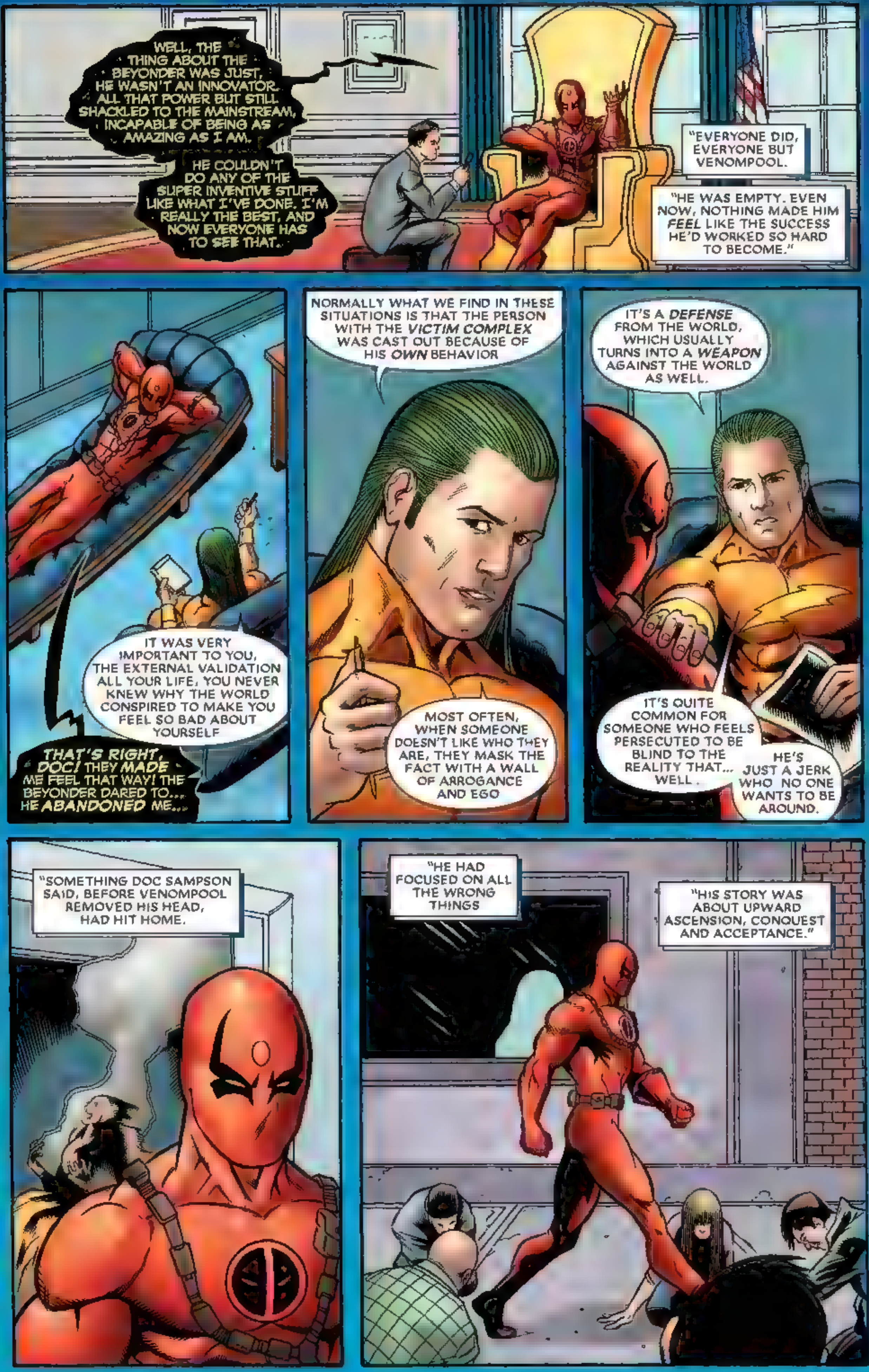

BEHOLD-- GALACTUS IS THE BABY DADDY!
MY REVENGE IS *FINALLY* COMPLETE, BEYONDER!
NO IT CAN'T BE NOT HIM
HOME-WRECKING MONSTER!
LET US SOLVE OUR DIFFERENCES WITH FISTS!
"AND THEY DID
"BUT THEY POSSESSED POWER TOO HOT FOR EXISTENCE!
"...AND THEY DESTROYED THE EARTH."
AFTER THE BREAK "MY TRANSSEXUAL BRIDEZILLA'S MOVED HER LOVER INTO OUR CAMPER VAN--IN SPACE!"

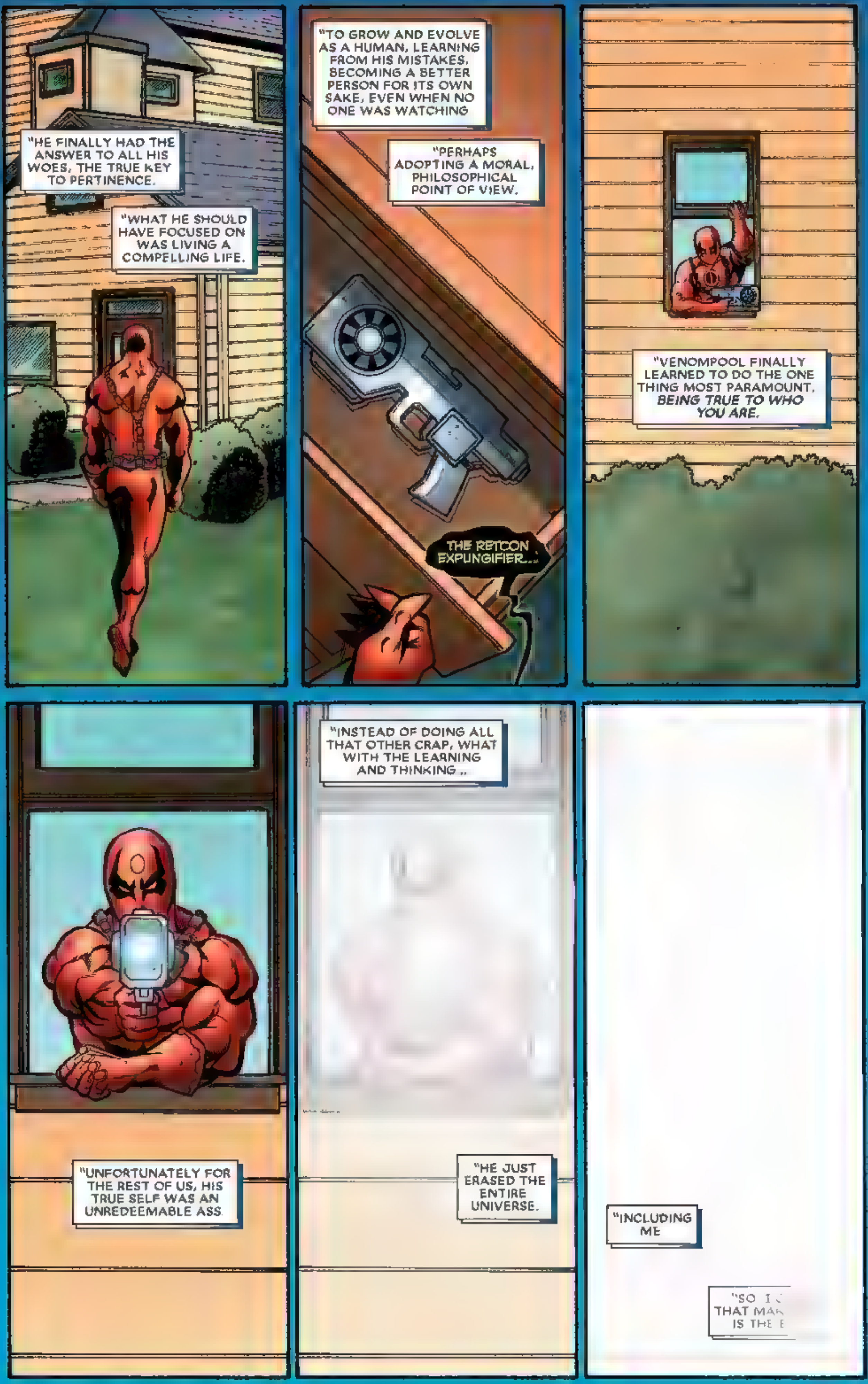

OH! *OH!!* I COULDN'T BE MORE EXCITED! WE HAVE, TONIGHT, ALL OF THE HOTTEST STARS COMING OUT FOR THE HIGHLY ANTICIPATED, HOTTER THAN THE SUN, PREMIERE FOR THE MOVIE OF THE CENTURY--
VENOMPOOL: THE MOST IMPORTANT MOVIE IN THE UNIVERSE!
"WITHOUT THIS HERO AND HIS HEROIC DEEDS NONE OF US WOULD EVEN BE HERE TO ENJOY THIS UNVEILING!
"THEY HAD BEEN THROUGH HARD TIMES, WADE WILSON AND HIS TRUSTED SYMBIOTE PAL.
"BUT THEY FOUGHT THROUGH AND NEVER GAVE UP. TONIGHT THEY WERE CELEBRATED FOR THEIR TENACITY.
"AS THE MOVIE PLAYED, VENOMPOOL FELT ONLY ONE THING
VENOMPOOL-IS-SO-AWESOME PRODUCTIONS PRESENTS
"NOT PRIDE IN THE ACHIEVEMENT
"NOT THE DIGNITY BORN FROM HELPING OTHERS.
"HE ONLY FELT A SORT OF SICK JOY, FOR THOSE HE'D MADE *ENVIOUS* OF HIS ACCOMPLISHMENTS."
WHAT IF VENOM POSSESSED DEADPOOL?
CHAPTER FOUR


FOOL! YOU HAVE DESTROYED GALACTUS'S BRUNCH PLANET!
FEAR NOT, MONSTER! FOR NOW YOU WILL HAVE YOUR FILL--YOU WILL DINE ON SUFFERING AND DEFEAT!
ENOUGH! ENOUGH OF YOUR POWER TRIPPING! YOU'RE BOTH TOO POWERFUL TO EXIST AND LEAVE ME ONLY ONE COURSE OF ACTION--
I HEREBY EXPUNGE YOU FROM ALL CONTINUITY!
"AND HE REALLY DID IT. JUST LIKE IN THE MOVIE.
"ERASED THE BEYONDER, AND GALACTUS SAVED THE EARTH SAVED US ALL.
THANK YOU, THANK YOU. YOU'RE TOO KIND, REALLY.
"EVERYTHING HE'D EVER WANTED.
"ADORATION.
"ATTENTION FOR HIS DEEDS
"HE'D ACHIEVED ABSOLUTE PERTINENCE."
NOW THAT YOU'VE GOT THE NUMBER ONE MOVIE IN THE WORLD--THE WORLD YOU SAVED--HOW DO YOU FEEL?
I DUNNO. OKAY, I GUESS.
"THOUGH HE HAD BECOME VERY RELEVANT, AND VERY IMPORTANT, SOMETHING WAS STILL MISSING
THOR!
OVER HERE, THOR!
CAN I GET AN EXCLUSIVE ABOUT YOUR RELATIONSHIP WITH HELA?!
"VENOMPOOL KNEW, FINALLY, WHAT THE PROBLEM WAS."


"OTHER PEOPLE WERE STILL GETTING ATTENTION AS WELL
"HE WENT TO CONTEMPLATE FOR DAYS.
"THERE WAS ONLY ONE WAY TO GET ALL THAT HE DESERVED
"TO WIPE OUT ANYONE CAPABLE OF SIMILAR HEROIC DEEDS"
SOON...
YOINK!
HEY!
WHAT? YOU HAVE ME MISTAKEN--
THERE CAN BE ONLY ONE HIGHLANDER!


"OVER THE NEXT YEAR, VENOMPOOL KILLED THEM ALL, EVERY HERO, EVERY VILLAIN...LEAVING ONLY THE VERY ATTRACTIVE ALIVE, FOR ADORATION PURPOSES.
"HE BECAME THE WORLD'S ONLY, AND THUS MOST IMPORTANT, SUPER HERO
"AND, OH, HOW HE MATTERED HE STARRED IN EVERY MOVIE, TELEVISION PROGRAM, BOOK AND MAGAZINE
"HIS ADVENTURES WERE *BIGGER* AND MORE *IMPORTANT* THAN *ANYONE'S* HAD *EVER* BEEN.
"EVERYTHING HE DID HAD A RIPPLE EFFECT ON THE WORLD. HE REALLY, REALLY MATTERED
"UNFORTUNATELY, HE DIDN'T HANDLE THE SUCCESS WITH GRACE
SUCK IT, WORLD! I'M THE BEST! NOW YOU SEE!
"INSTEAD, IT WAS AN OPPORTUNITY TO DECRY ALL THOSE WHO OPPOSED HIM ALONG THE WAY TO BECOMING KING OF THE WORLD
"HE WOULD SPEND HIS VICTORY LAP CONSUMED BY THEIR IMPRESSIONS OF HIM, GIVEN OVER TO EGO, MIRED IN PETTY RIVALRY
THE BEYONDER? A REAL TOOL...LET ME GIVE YOU THE 411 ON HIM...
YOU ERASED HIM AND HE DOESN'T EXIST ANYMORE, DISPARAGING HIM NOW, WHEN YOU HAVE SO MUCH...IT SEEMS, WELL, TACKY.
"CRUSHED UNDER THE WEIGHT OF LONG PAST REJECTION AND A DESPERATE INSECURITY THAT NO SUCCESS COULD QUELL, HIS EGO GREW TO COMPENSATE
"WITH NO CONSEQUENCES FOR HIS ACTIONS, HIS TRUE FABRIC COULD NOW BE EXPOSED."
TURN OFF THE CAMERA.


WELL, THE THING ABOUT THE BEYONDER WAS JUST, HE WASN'T AN INNOVATOR. ALL THAT POWER BUT STILL SHACKLED TO THE MAINSTREAM, INCAPABLE OF BEING AS AMAZING AS I AM.
HE COULDN'T DO ANY OF THE SUPER INVENTIVE STUFF LIKE WHAT I'VE DONE. I'M REALLY THE BEST, AND NOW EVERYONE HAS TO SEE THAT.
"EVERYONE DID, EVERYONE BUT VENOMPOOL.
"HE WAS EMPTY. EVEN NOW, NOTHING MADE HIM *FEEL* LIKE THE SUCCESS HE'D WORKED SO HARD TO BECOME."
IT WAS VERY IMPORTANT TO YOU, THE EXTERNAL VALIDATION ALL YOUR LIFE. YOU NEVER KNEW WHY THE WORLD CONSPIRED TO MAKE YOU FEEL SO BAD ABOUT YOURSELF.
THAT'S RIGHT, DOC! THEY *MADE* ME FEEL THAT WAY! THE BEYONDER DARED TO... HE *ABANDONED* ME...
NORMALLY WHAT WE FIND IN THESE SITUATIONS IS THAT THE PERSON WITH THE *VICTIM COMPLEX* WAS CAST OUT BECAUSE OF HIS *OWN* BEHAVIOR.
MOST OFTEN, WHEN SOMEONE DOESN'T LIKE WHO THEY ARE, THEY MASK THE FACT WITH A WALL OF ARROGANCE AND EGO.
IT'S A *DEFENSE* FROM THE WORLD, WHICH USUALLY TURNS INTO A *WEAPON* AGAINST THE WORLD AS WELL.
IT'S QUITE COMMON FOR SOMEONE WHO FEELS PERSECUTED TO BE BLIND TO THE REALITY THAT... WELL.
HE'S JUST A JERK WHO NO ONE WANTS TO BE AROUND.
"SOMETHING DOC SAMPSON SAID, BEFORE VENOMPOOL REMOVED HIS HEAD, HAD HIT HOME.
"HE HAD FOCUSED ON ALL THE WRONG THINGS.
"HIS STORY WAS ABOUT UPWARD ASCENSION, CONQUEST AND ACCEPTANCE."


"HE FINALLY HAD THE ANSWER TO ALL HIS WOES, THE TRUE KEY TO PERTINENCE.
"WHAT HE SHOULD HAVE FOCUSED ON WAS LIVING A COMPELLING LIFE.
"TO GROW AND EVOLVE AS A HUMAN, LEARNING FROM HIS MISTAKES, BECOMING A BETTER PERSON FOR ITS OWN SAKE, EVEN WHEN NO ONE WAS WATCHING
"PERHAPS ADOPTING A MORAL, PHILOSOPHICAL POINT OF VIEW.
THE RETCON EXPUNGIFIER...!
"VENOMPOOL FINALLY LEARNED TO DO THE ONE THING MOST PARAMOUNT, *BEING TRUE TO WHO YOU ARE.*
"UNFORTUNATELY FOR THE REST OF US, HIS TRUE SELF WAS AN UNREDEEMABLE ASS.
"INSTEAD OF DOING ALL THAT OTHER CRAP, WHAT WITH THE LEARNING AND THINKING...
"HE JUST ERASED THE ENTIRE UNIVERSE.
"INCLUDING ME
"SO I
THAT MA
IS THE

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MILLIGAN
COKER
FREEDMAN

"Until now, the world
has been uncomplicated.
Pure.
There has been war.
Life or death.
Honor or dishonor."

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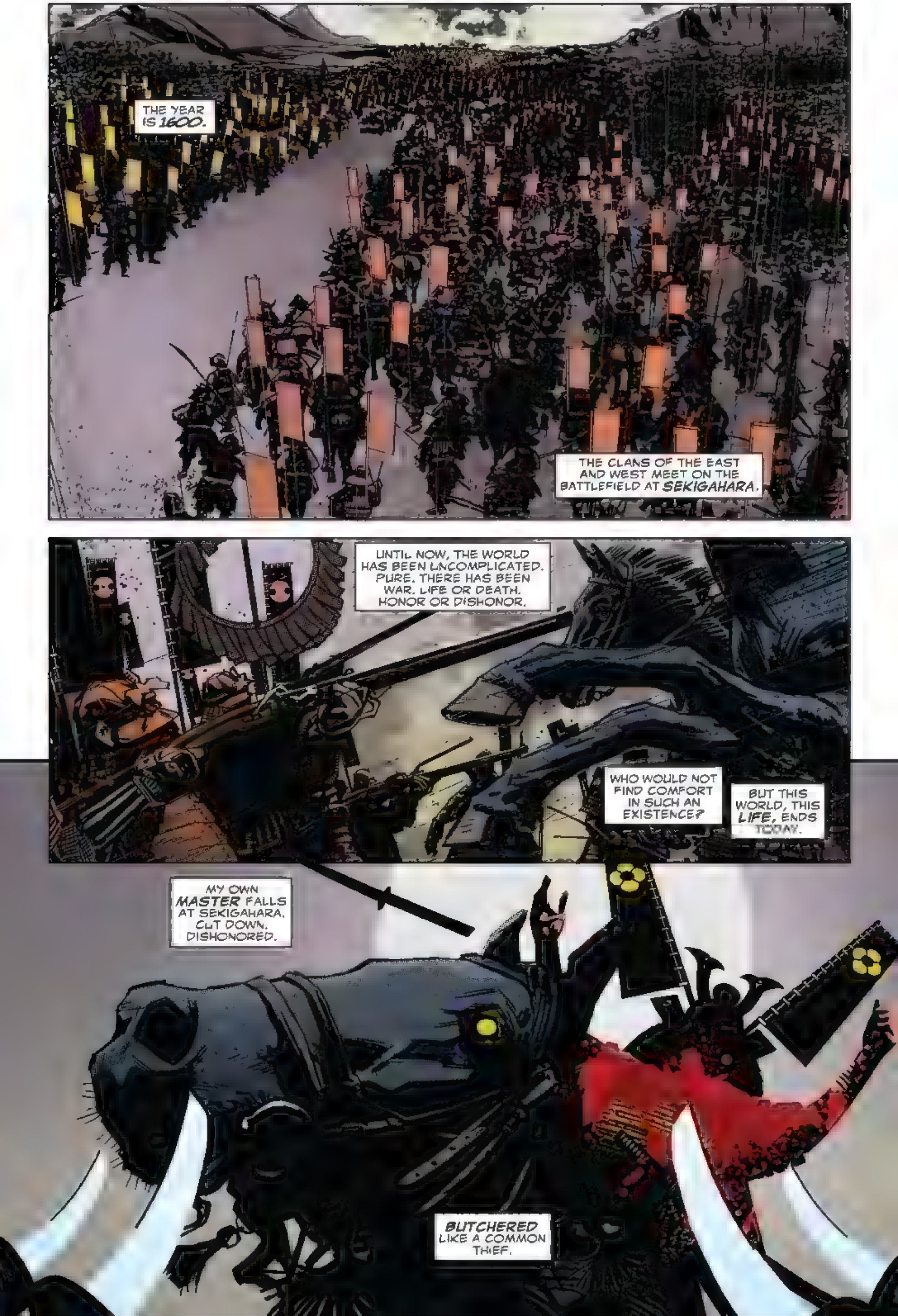
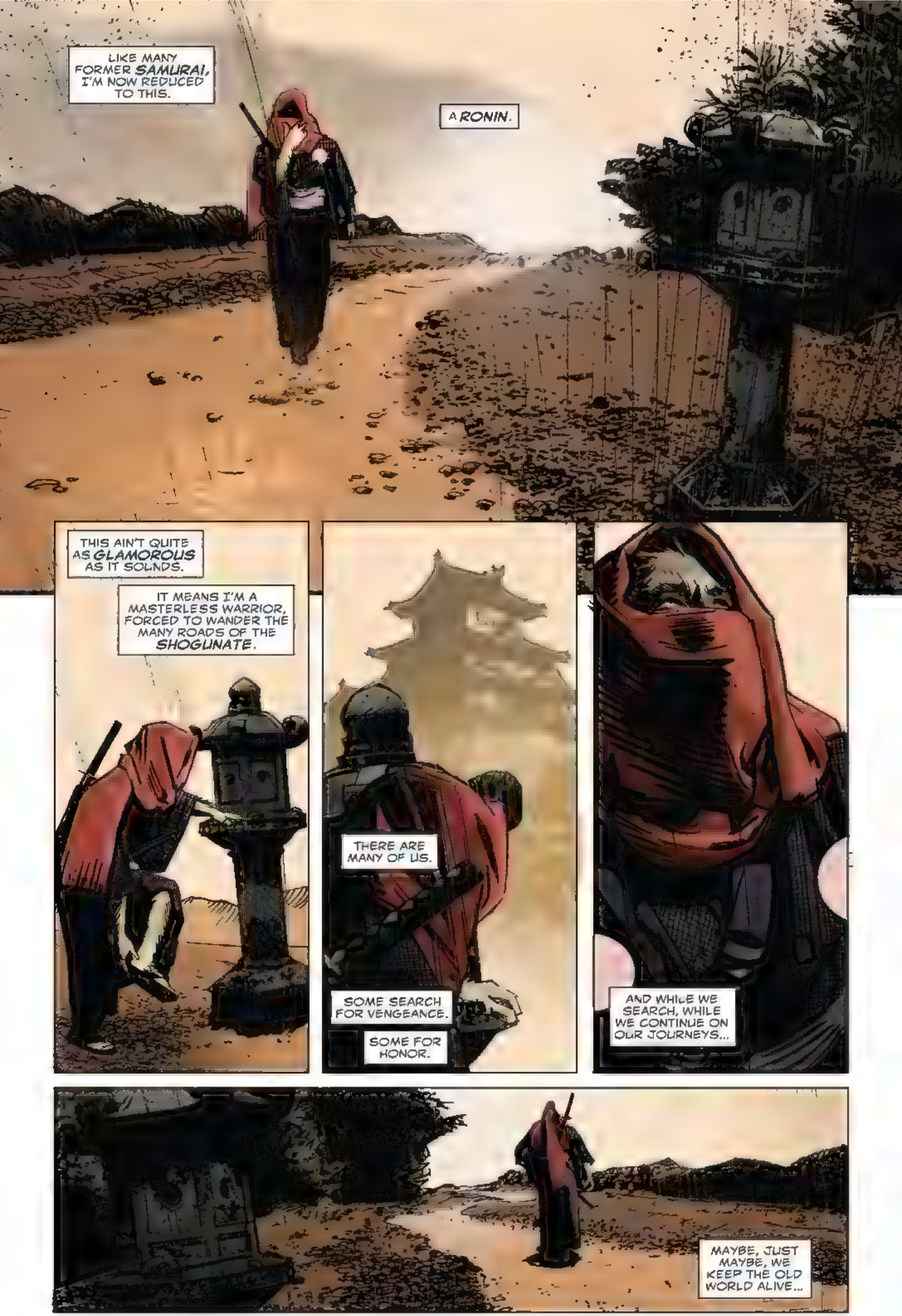
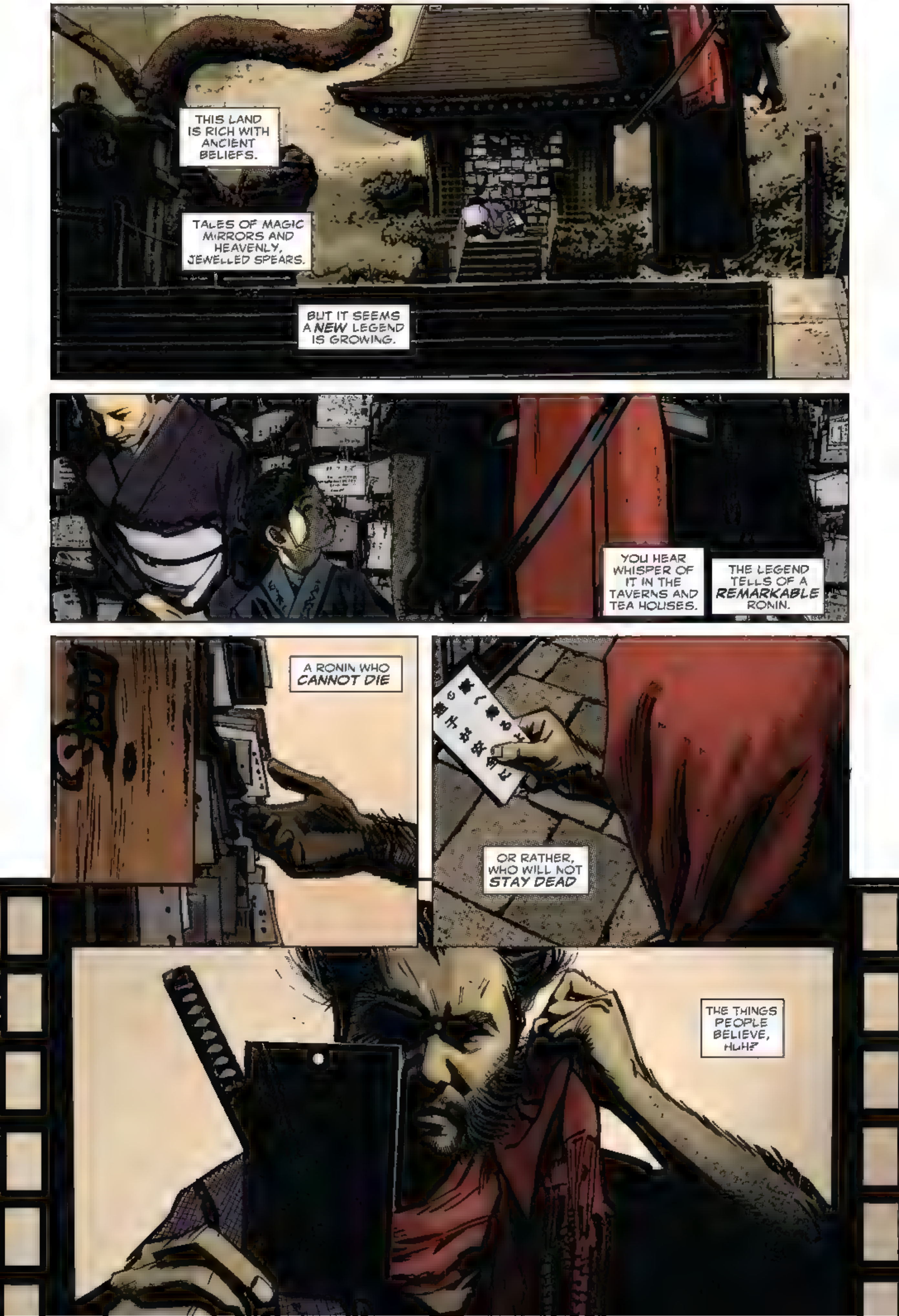
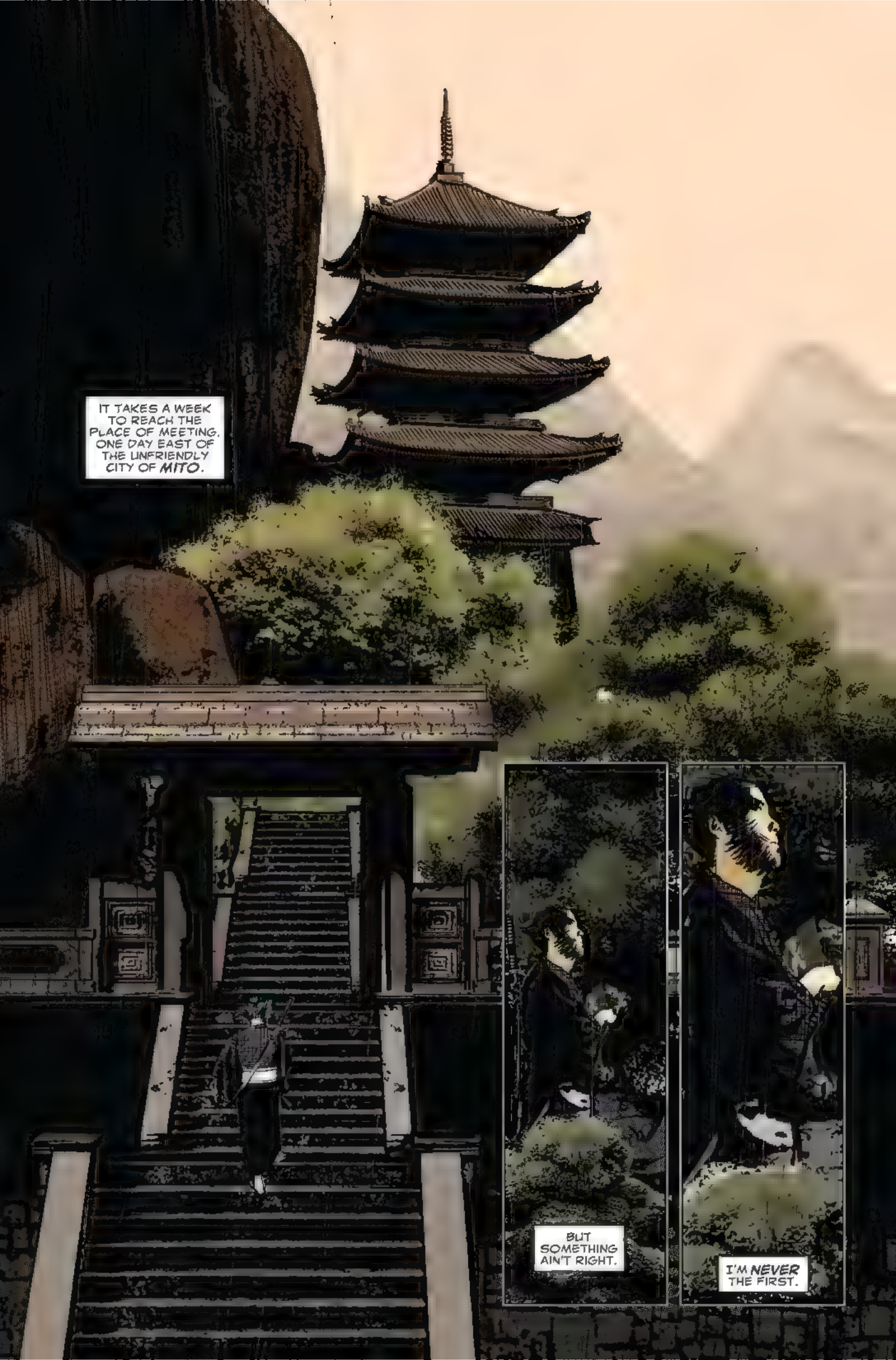
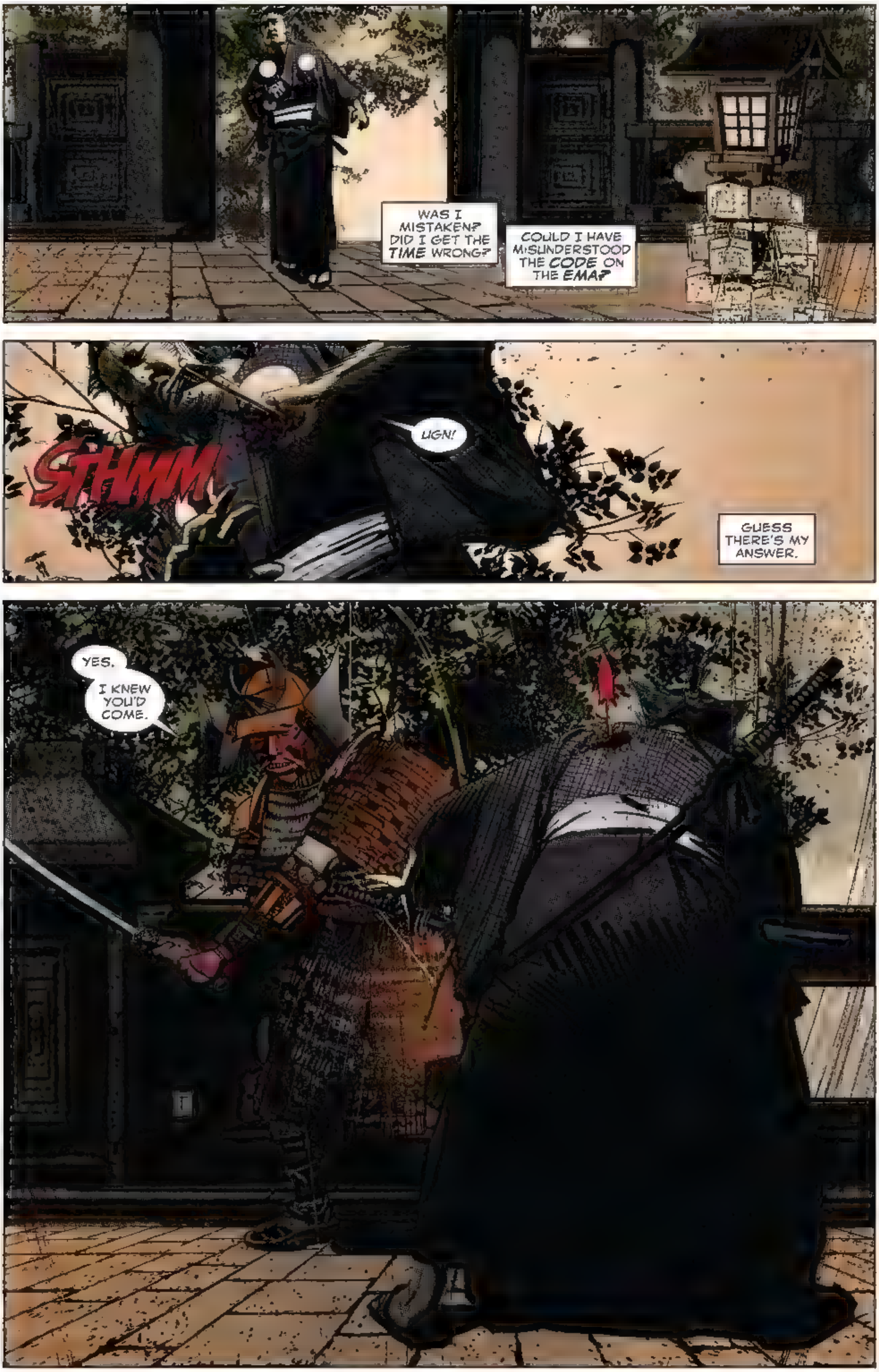
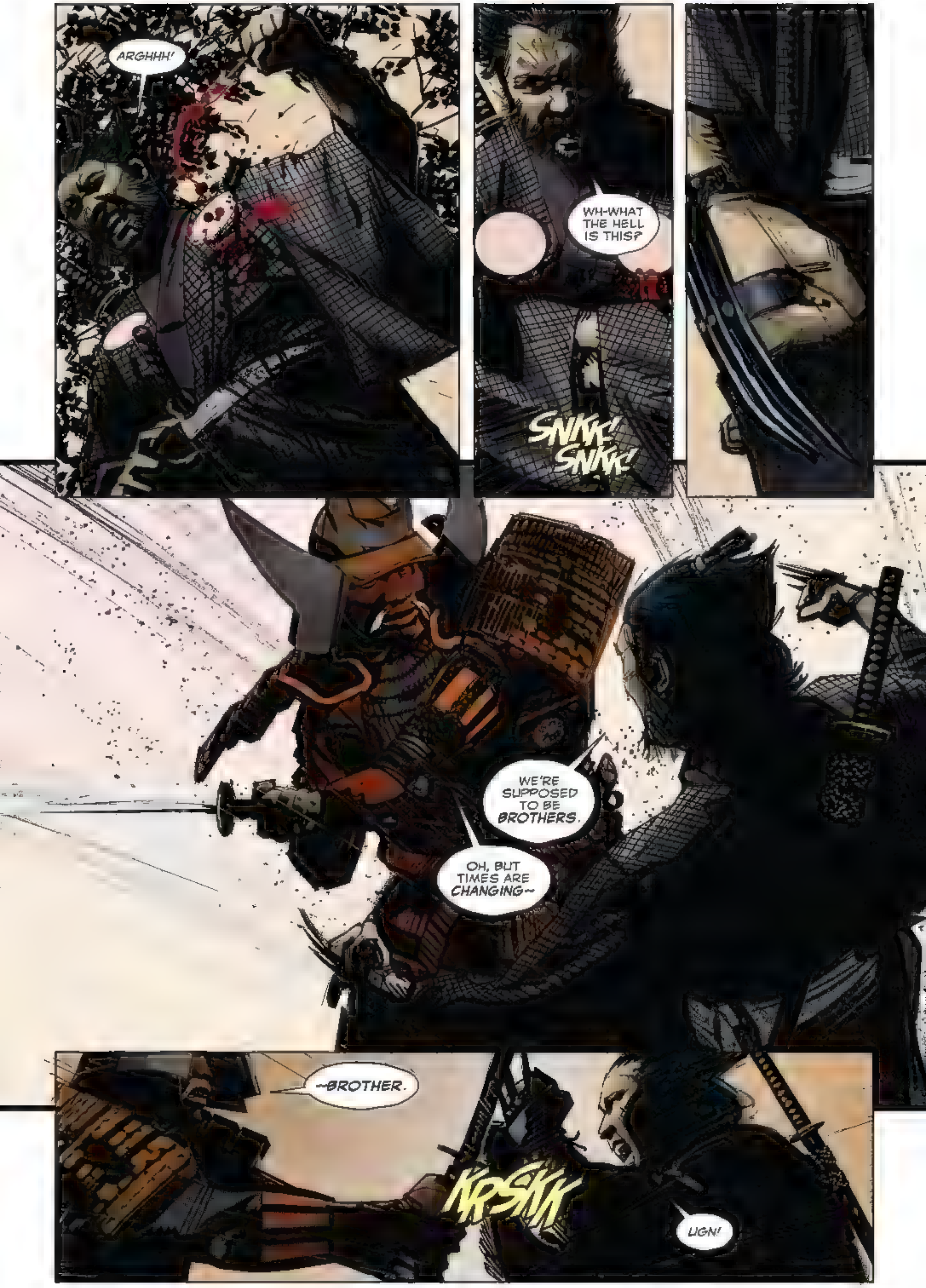

THE YEAR IS *1600.*
THE CLANS OF THE EAST AND WEST MEET ON THE BATTLEFIELD AT *SEKIGAHARA.*
UNTIL NOW, THE WORLD HAS BEEN UNCOMPLICATED. PURE. THERE HAS BEEN WAR. LIFE OR DEATH. HONOR OR DISHONOR.
WHO WOULD NOT FIND COMFORT IN SUCH AN EXISTENCE?
BUT THIS WORLD, THIS *LIFE,* ENDS TODAY.
MY OWN *MASTER* FALLS AT SEKIGAHARA. CUT DOWN. DISHONORED.
BUTCHERED LIKE A COMMON THIEF.

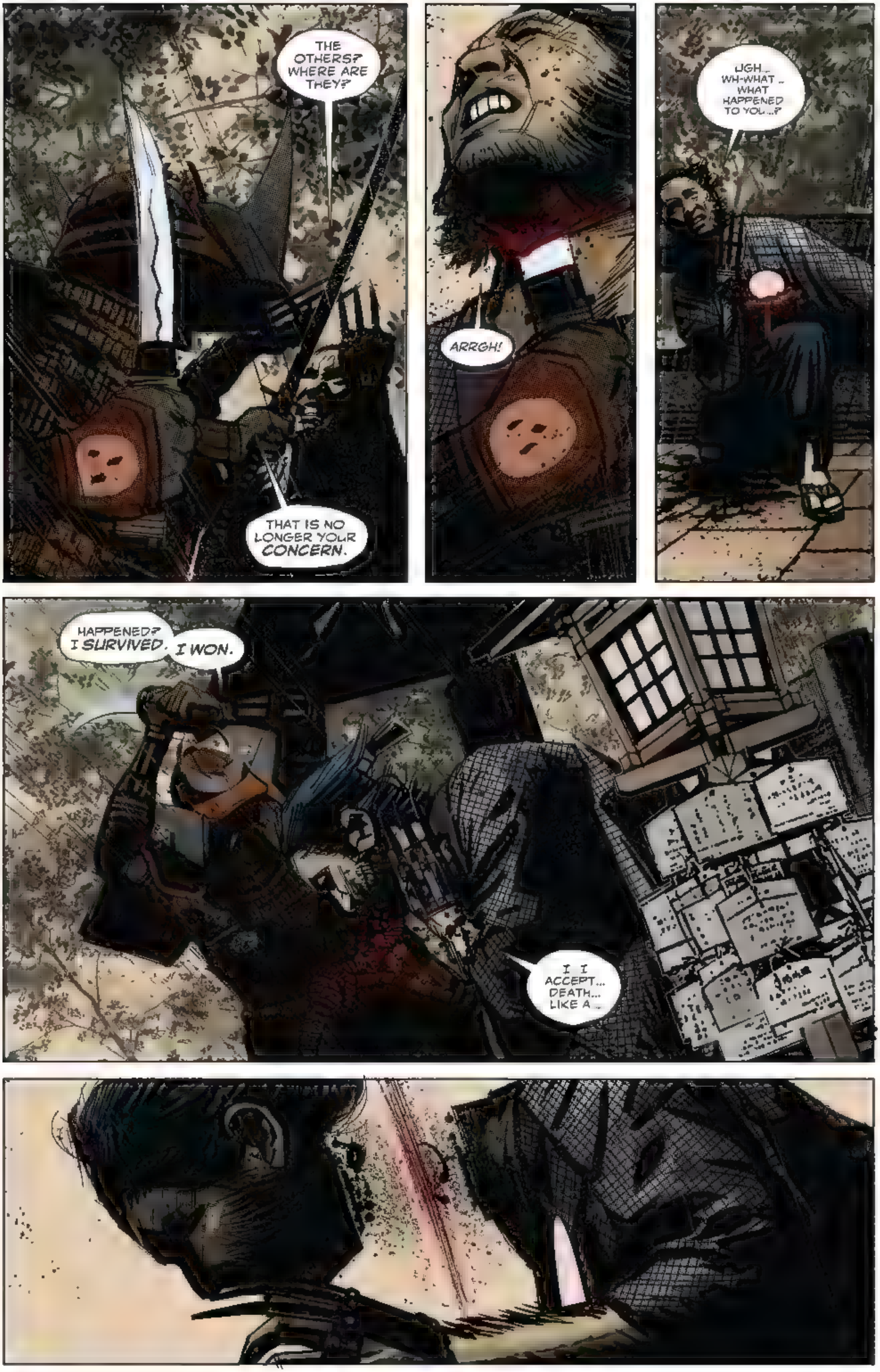

LIKE MANY FORMER SAMURAI, I'M NOW REDUCED TO THIS.
A RONIN.
THIS AIN'T QUITE AS GLAMOROUS AS IT SOUNDS.
IT MEANS I'M A MASTERLESS WARRIOR, FORCED TO WANDER THE MANY ROADS OF THE SHOGUNATE.
THERE ARE MANY OF US.
SOME SEARCH FOR VENGEANCE.
SOME FOR HONOR.
AND WHILE WE SEARCH, WHILE WE CONTINUE ON OUR JOURNEYS...
MAYBE, JUST MAYBE, WE KEEP THE OLD WORLD ALIVE...

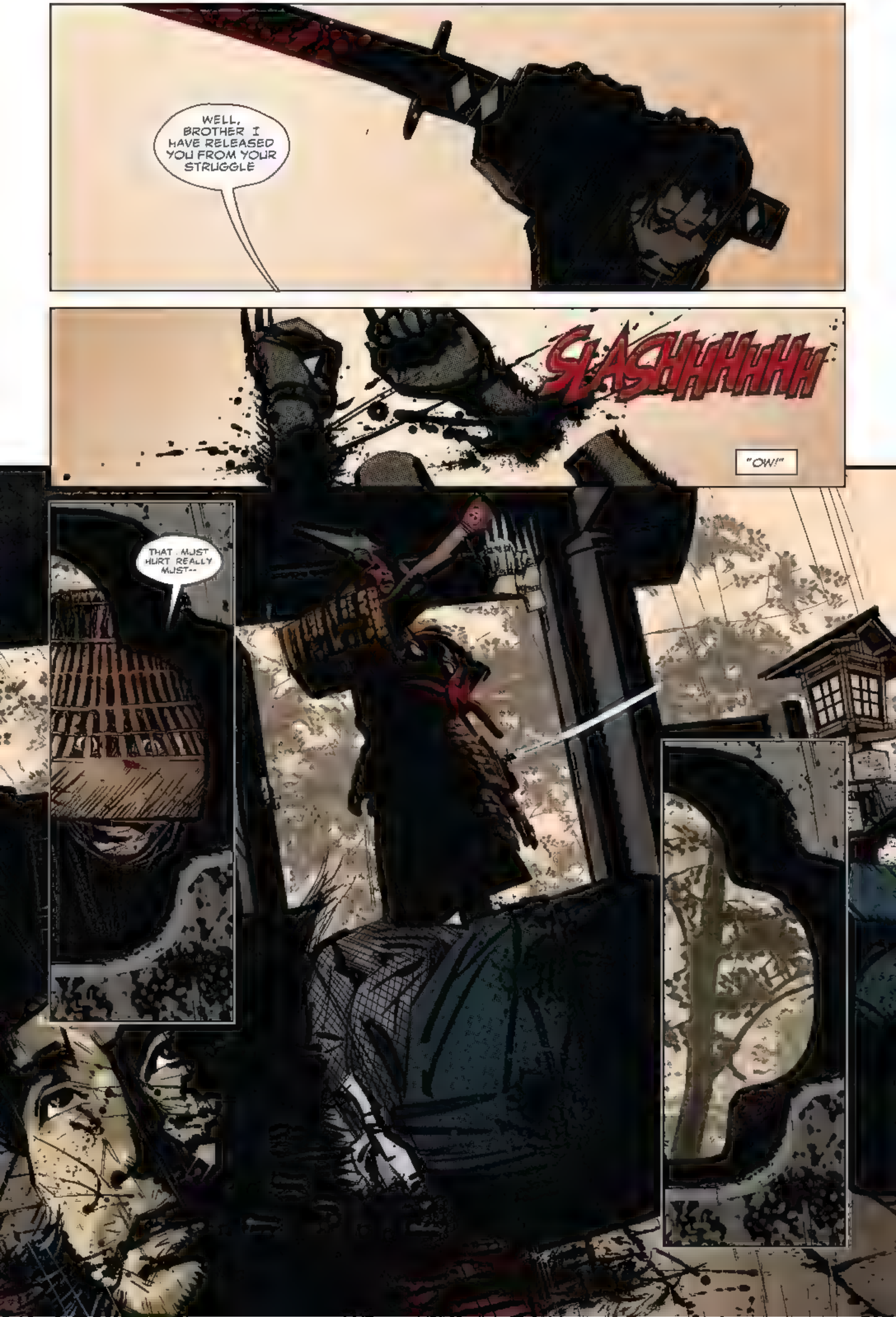

THIS LAND IS RICH WITH ANCIENT BELIEFS.
TALES OF MAGIC MIRRORS AND HEAVENLY, JEWELLED SPEARS.
BUT IT SEEMS A *NEW* LEGEND IS GROWING.
YOU HEAR WHISPER OF IT IN THE TAVERNS AND TEA HOUSES.
THE LEGEND TELLS OF A *REMARKABLE* RONIN.
A RONIN WHO *CANNOT DIE*
OR RATHER, WHO WILL NOT *STAY DEAD*
THE THINGS PEOPLE BELIEVE, HUH?

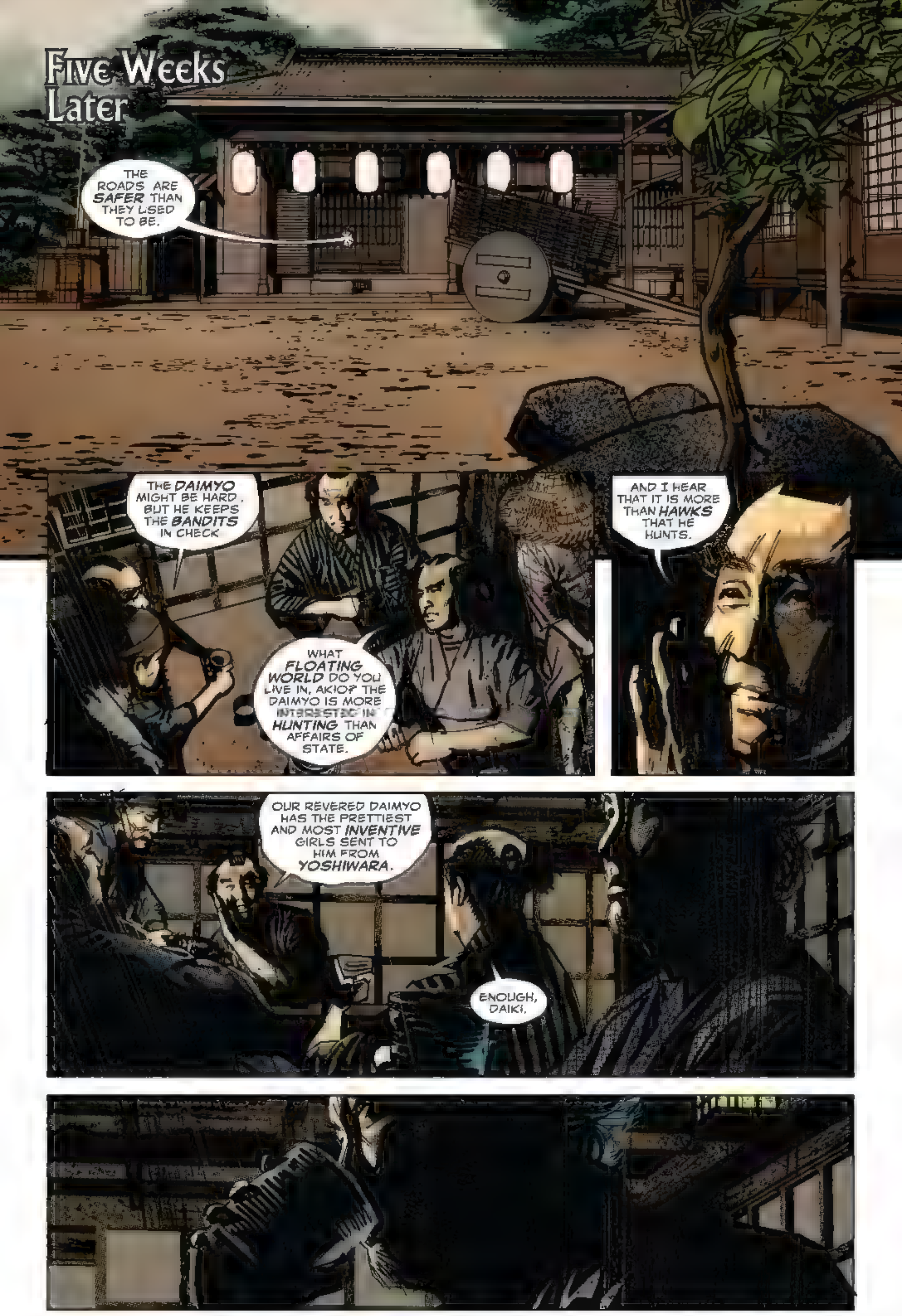

IT TAKES A WEEK TO REACH THE PLACE OF MEETING. ONE DAY EAST OF THE UNFRIENDLY CITY OF **MITO**.
BUT SOMETHING AIN'T RIGHT.
I'M **NEVER** THE FIRST.

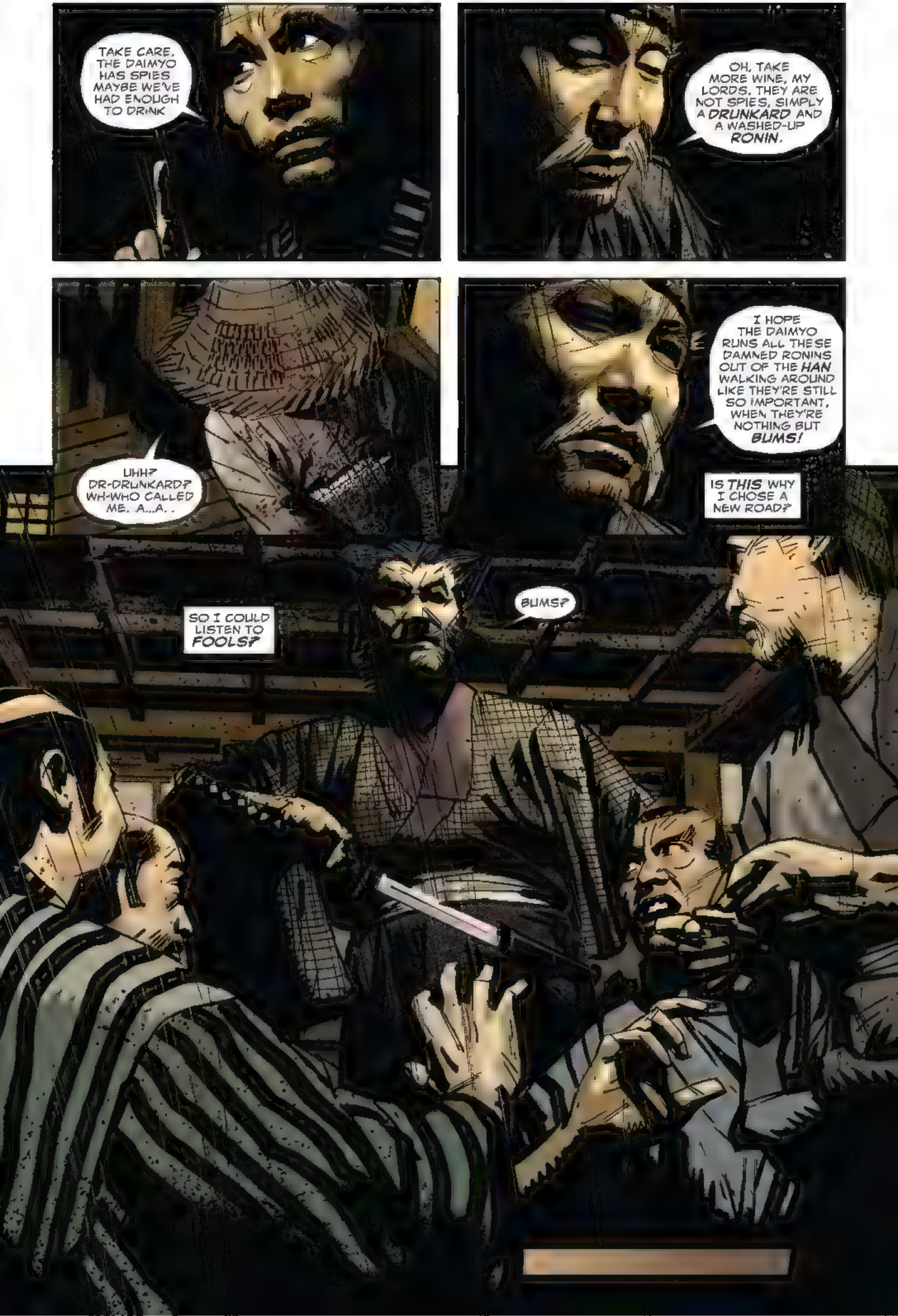

WAS I MISTAKEN? DID I GET THE TIME WRONG?
COULD I HAVE MISUNDERSTOOD THE CODE ON THE EMA?
STHMM
UGN!
GUESS THERE'S MY ANSWER.
YES.
I KNEW YOU'D COME.

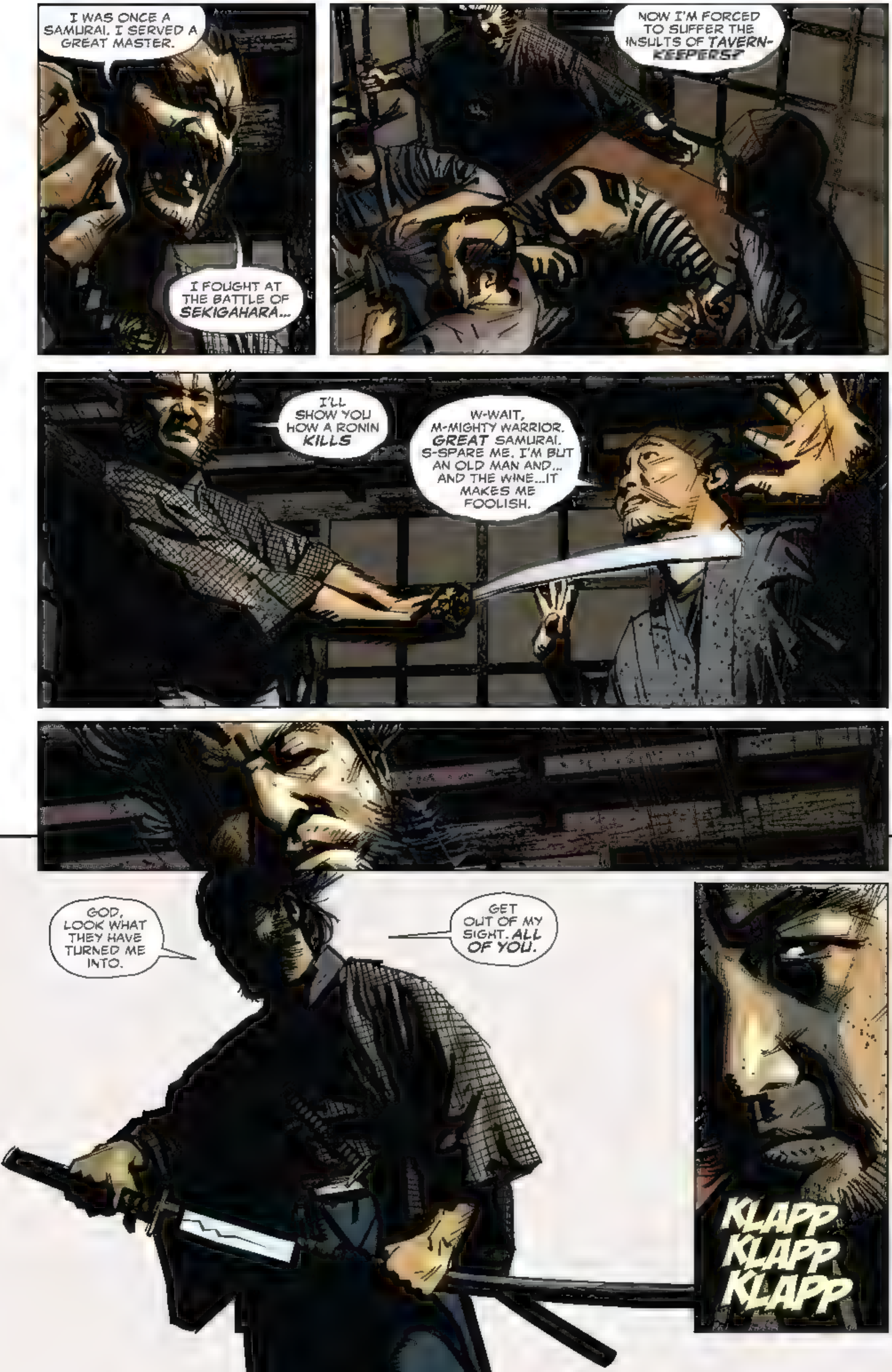

ARGHHH!
WH-WHAT THE HELL IS THIS?
SNIKT! SNIKT!
WE'RE SUPPOSED TO BE BROTHERS.
OH, BUT TIMES ARE CHANGING~
~BROTHER.
KRSHK
UGN!

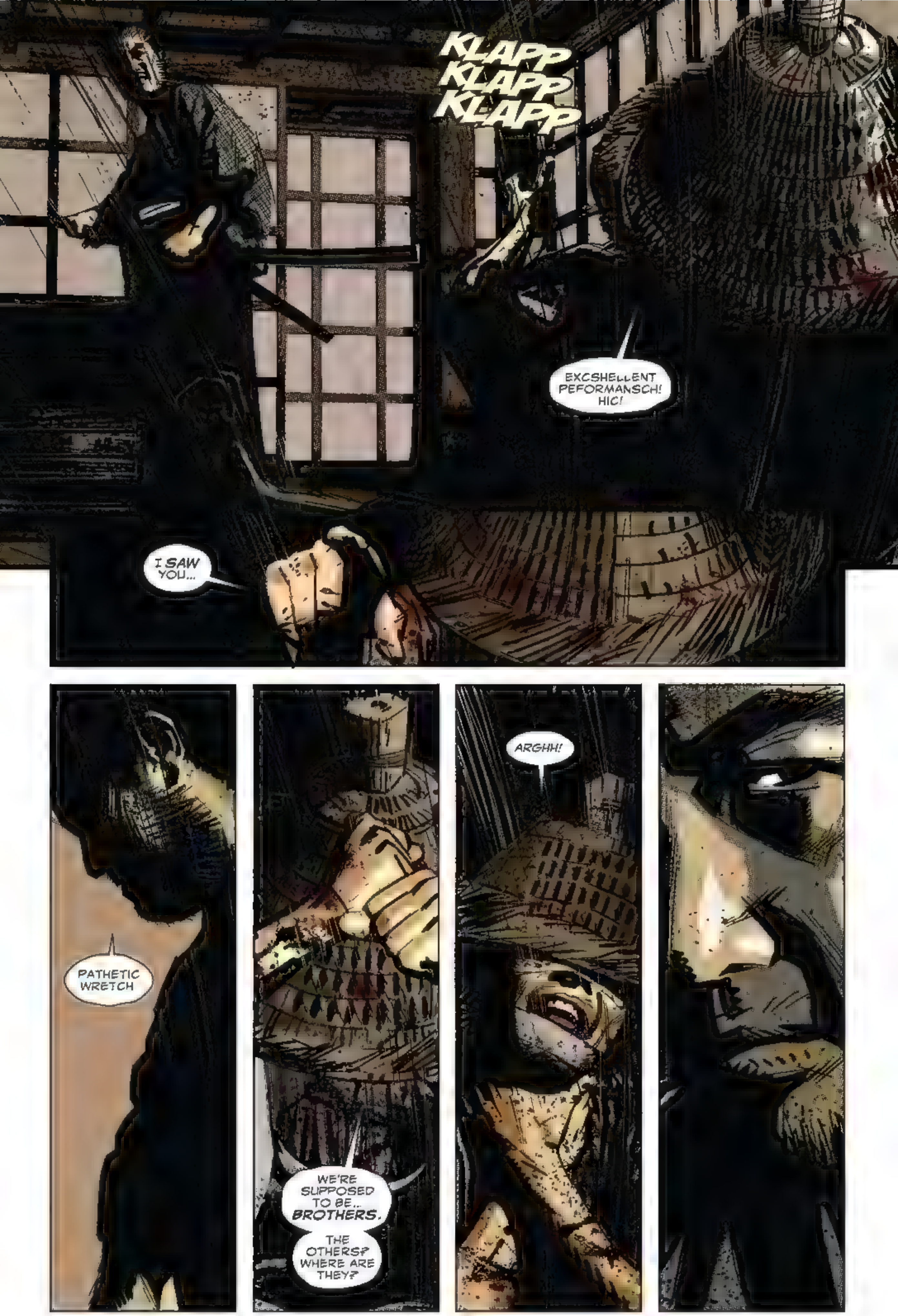

THE OTHERS? WHERE ARE THEY?
THAT IS NO LONGER YOUR CONCERN.
ARRGH!
UGH... WH-WHAT... WHAT HAPPENED TO YOU...?
HAPPENED? I SURVIVED.
I WON.
I I ACCEPT... DEATH... LIKE A...

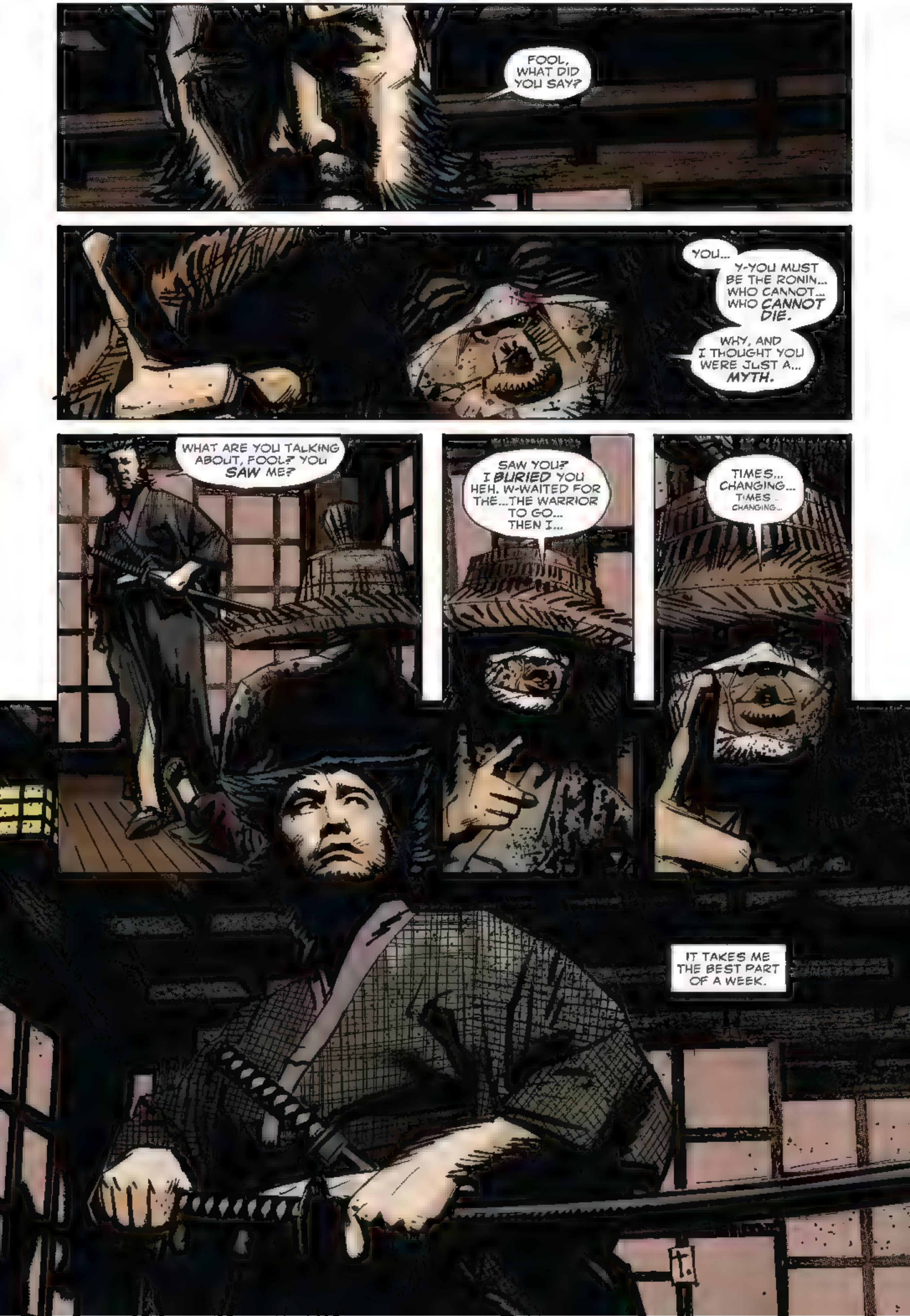

WELL, BROTHER I HAVE RELEASED YOU FROM YOUR STRUGGLE
SLASHHHHHH
"OW!"
THAT MUST HURT REALLY MUST--

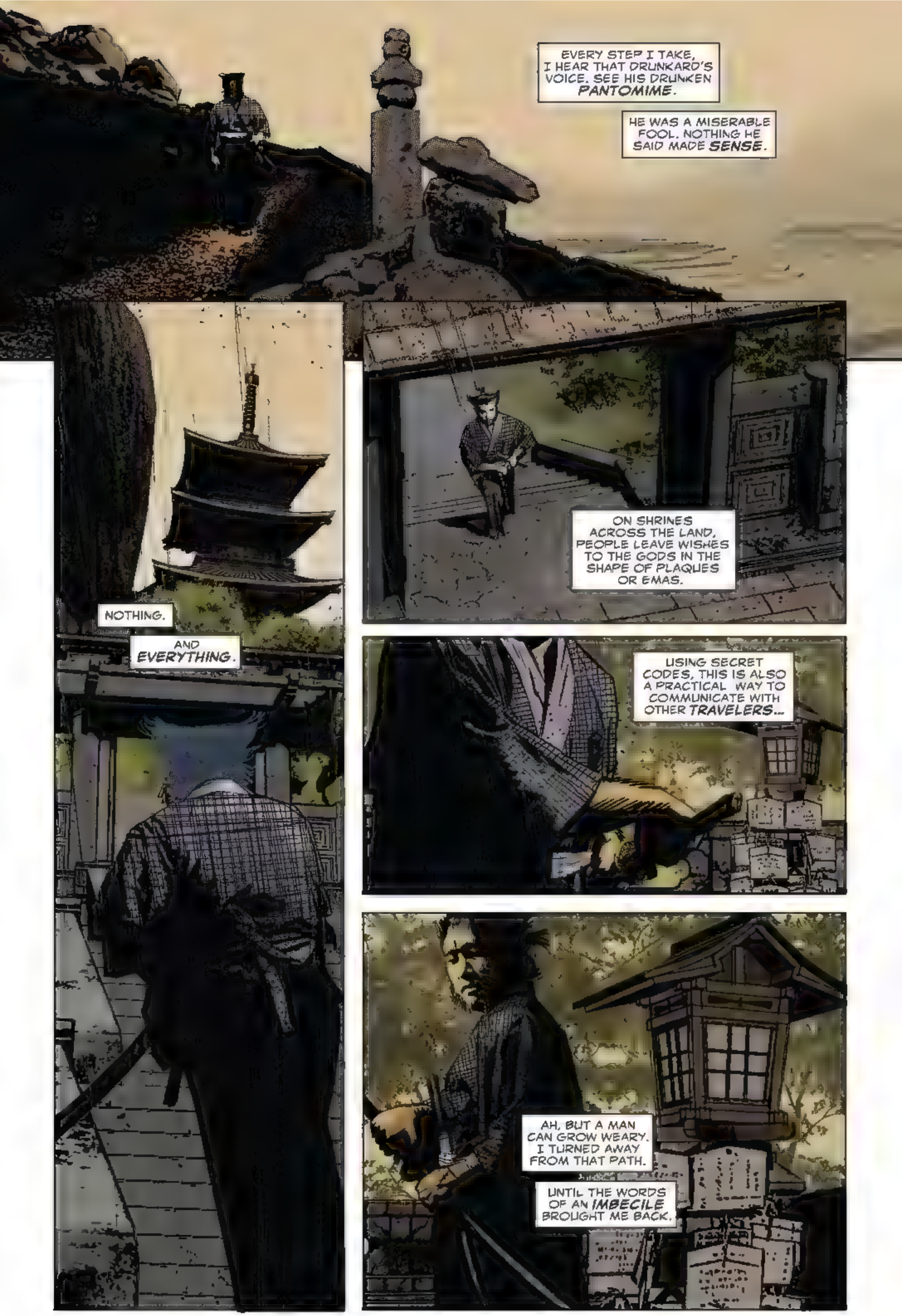

Five Weeks Later
THE ROADS ARE SAFER THAN THEY USED TO BE.
THE DAIMYO MIGHT BE HARD, BUT HE KEEPS THE BANDITS IN CHECK.
WHAT FLOATING WORLD DO YOU LIVE IN, AKIO? THE DAIMYO IS MORE INTERESTED IN HUNTING THAN AFFAIRS OF STATE.
AND I HEAR THAT IT IS MORE THAN HAWKS THAT HE HUNTS.
OUR REVERED DAIMYO HAS THE PRETTIEST AND MOST INVENTIVE GIRLS SENT TO HIM FROM YOSHIWARA.
ENOUGH, DAIKI.

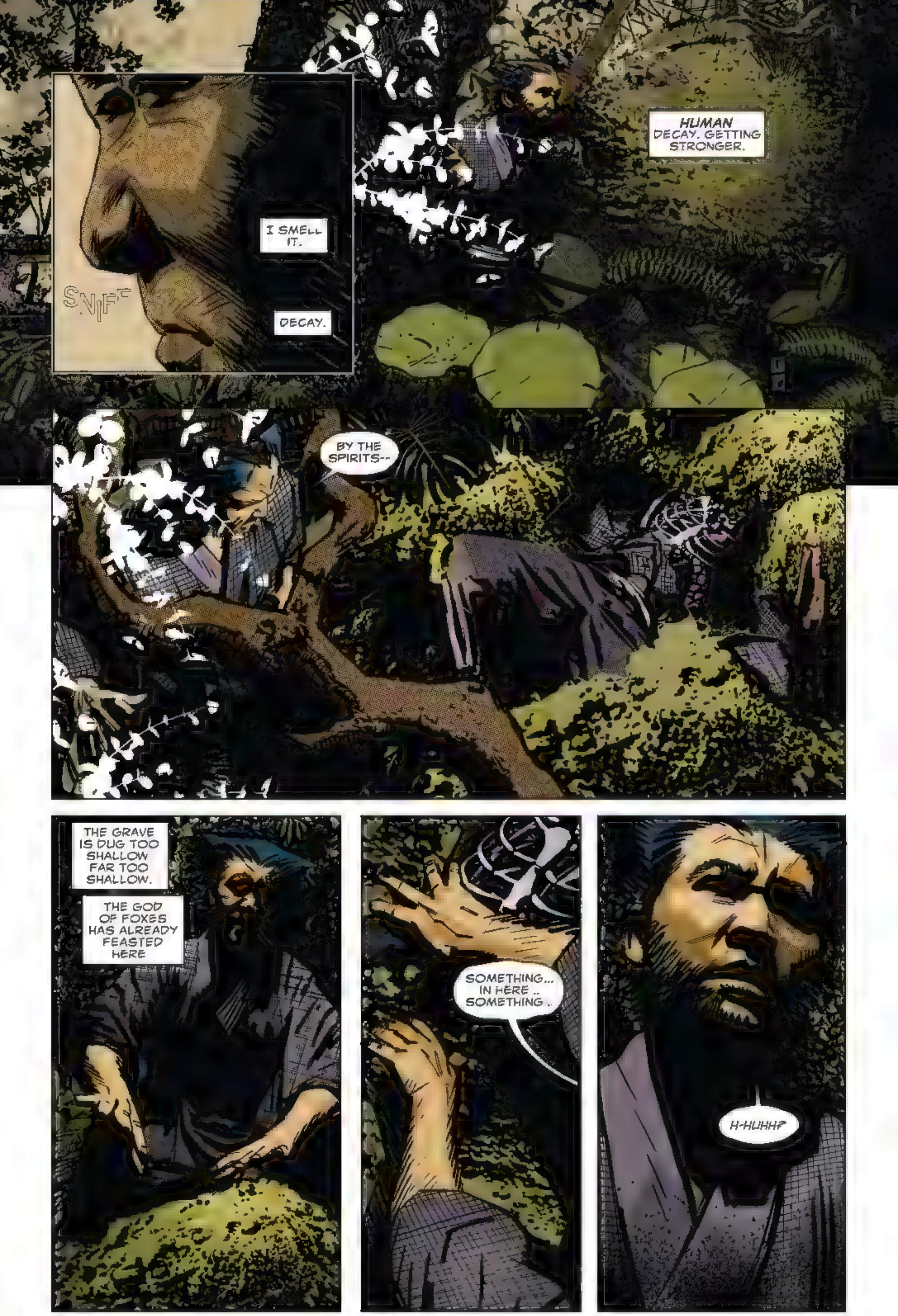

TAKE CARE. THE DAIMYO HAS SPIES MAYBE WE'VE HAD ENOUGH TO DRINK
OH, TAKE MORE WINE, MY LORDS. THEY ARE NOT SPIES, SIMPLY A *DRUNKARD* AND A WASHED-UP *RONIN*.
UHH? DR-DRUNKARD? WH-WHO CALLED ME.. A...A. . .
I HOPE THE DAIMYO RUNS ALL THESE DAMNED RONINS OUT OF THE *HAN* WALKING AROUND LIKE THEY'RE STILL SO IMPORTANT, WHEN THEY'RE NOTHING BUT *BUMS!*
IS *THIS* WHY I CHOSE A NEW ROAD?
SO I COULD LISTEN TO *FOOLS?*
BUMS?

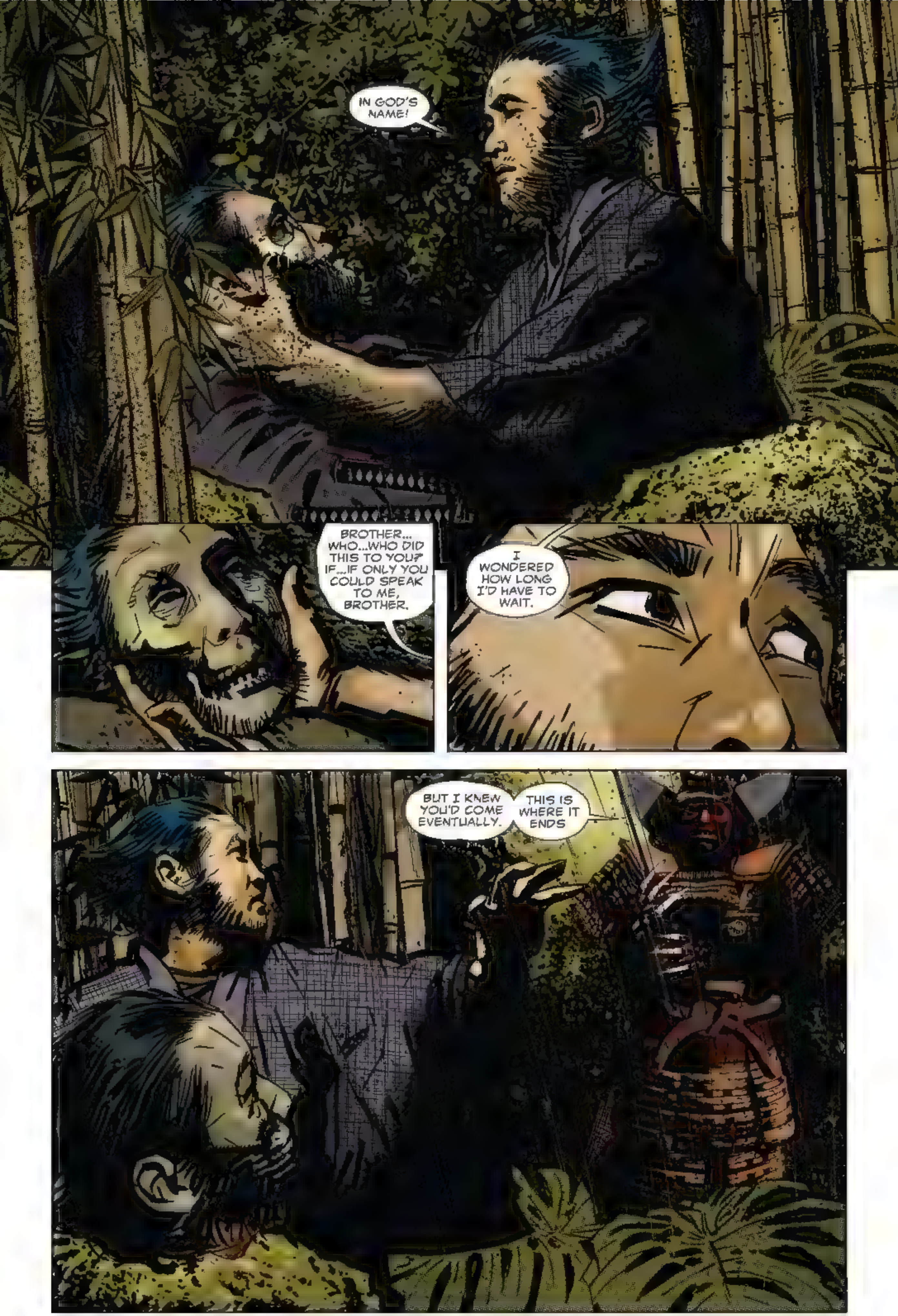

I WAS ONCE A SAMURAI. I SERVED A GREAT MASTER.
I FOUGHT AT THE BATTLE OF SEKIGAHARA...
NOW I'M FORCED TO SUFFER THE INSULTS OF TAVERN-KEEPERS?
I'LL SHOW YOU HOW A RONIN KILLS
W-WAIT, M-MIGHTY WARRIOR. GREAT SAMURAI. S-SPARE ME. I'M BUT AN OLD MAN AND... AND THE WINE...IT MAKES ME FOOLISH.
GOD, LOOK WHAT THEY HAVE TURNED ME INTO.
GET OUT OF MY SIGHT. ALL OF YOU.
KLAPP KLAPP KLAPP

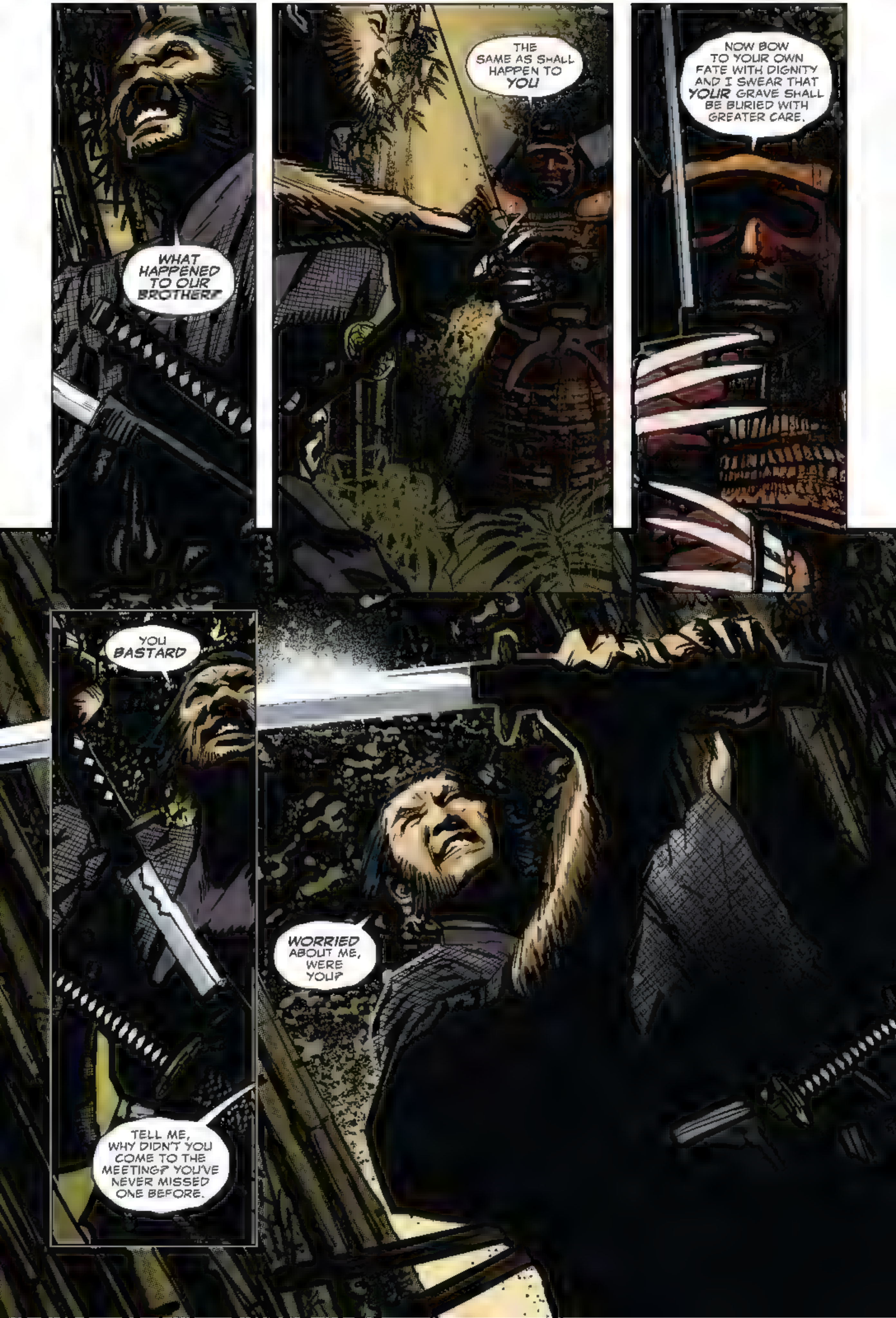

KLAPP KLAPP KLAPP
EXCSHELLENT PEFORMANSCH! HIC!
I SAW YOU...
PATHETIC WRETCH
WE'RE SUPPOSED TO BE... *BROTHERS.*
THE OTHERS? WHERE ARE THEY?
ARGHH!

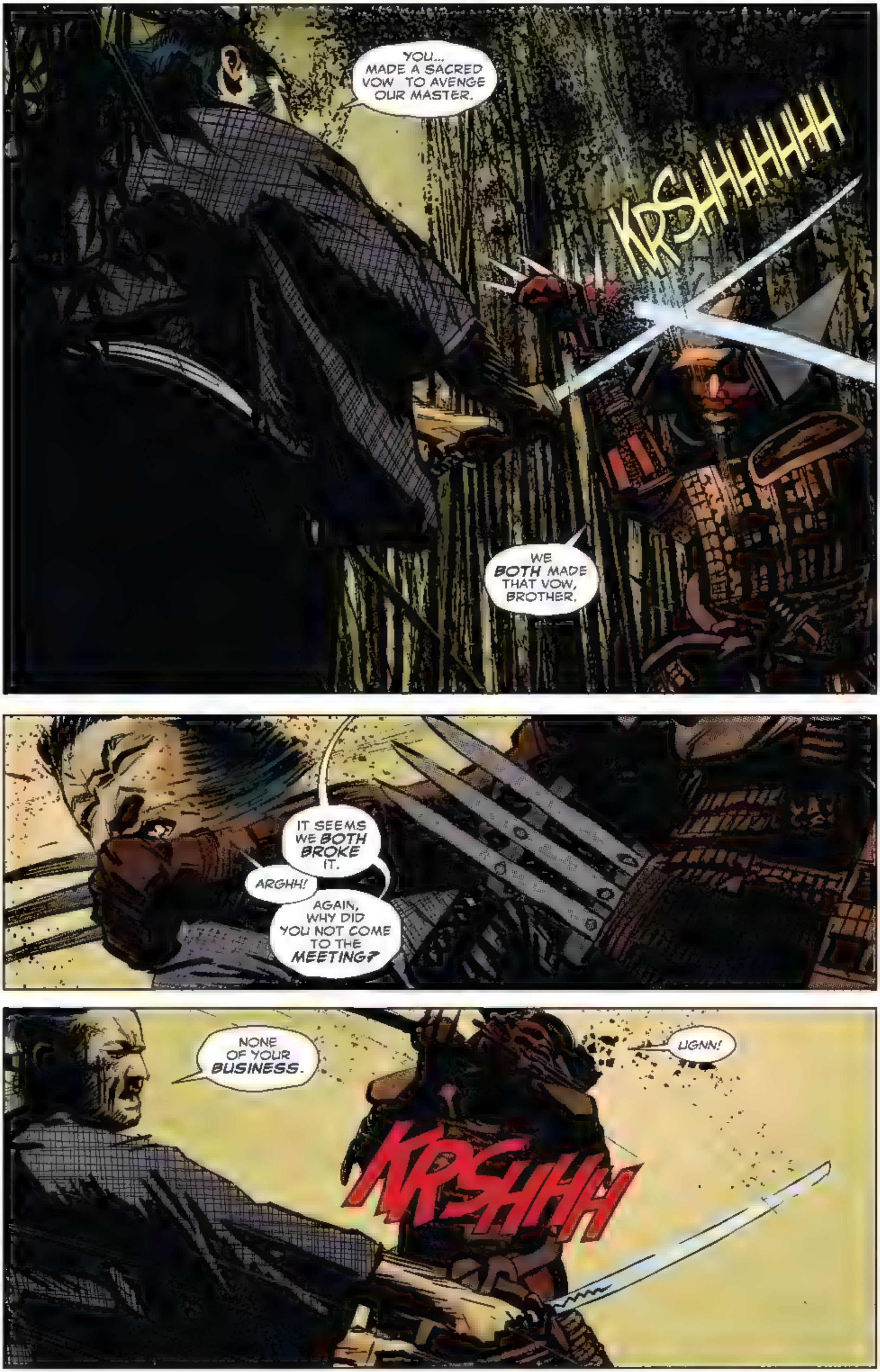

FOOL, WHAT DID YOU SAY?
YOU...
Y-YOU MUST BE THE RONIN... WHO CANNOT... WHO *CANNOT DIE.*
WHY, AND I THOUGHT YOU WERE JUST A... *MYTH.*
WHAT ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT, FOOL? YOU *SAW* ME?
SAW YOU? I *BURIED* YOU HEH. W-WAITED FOR THE...THE WARRIOR TO GO... THEN I...
TIMES... CHANGING... TIMES .. CHANGING...
IT TAKES ME THE BEST PART OF A WEEK.

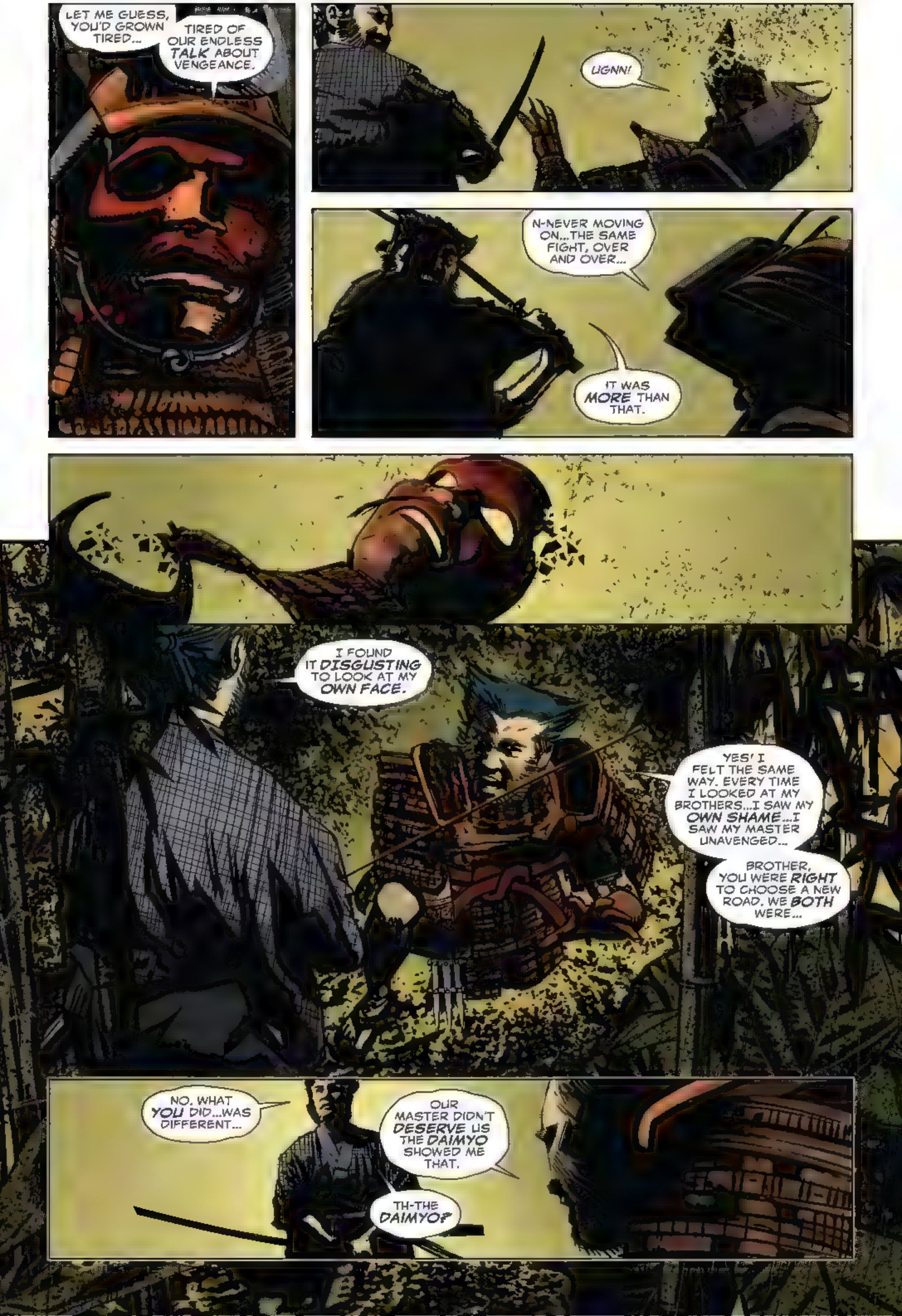

EVERY STEP I TAKE, I HEAR THAT DRUNKARD'S VOICE. SEE HIS DRUNKEN *PANTOMIME*.
HE WAS A MISERABLE FOOL. NOTHING HE SAID MADE *SENSE*.
NOTHING.
AND *EVERYTHING*.
ON SHRINES ACROSS THE LAND, PEOPLE LEAVE WISHES TO THE GODS IN THE SHAPE OF PLAQUES OR EMAS.
USING SECRET CODES, THIS IS ALSO A PRACTICAL WAY TO COMMUNICATE WITH OTHER *TRAVELERS*...
AH, BUT A MAN CAN GROW WEARY. I TURNED AWAY FROM THAT PATH.
UNTIL THE WORDS OF AN *IMBECILE* BROUGHT ME BACK.

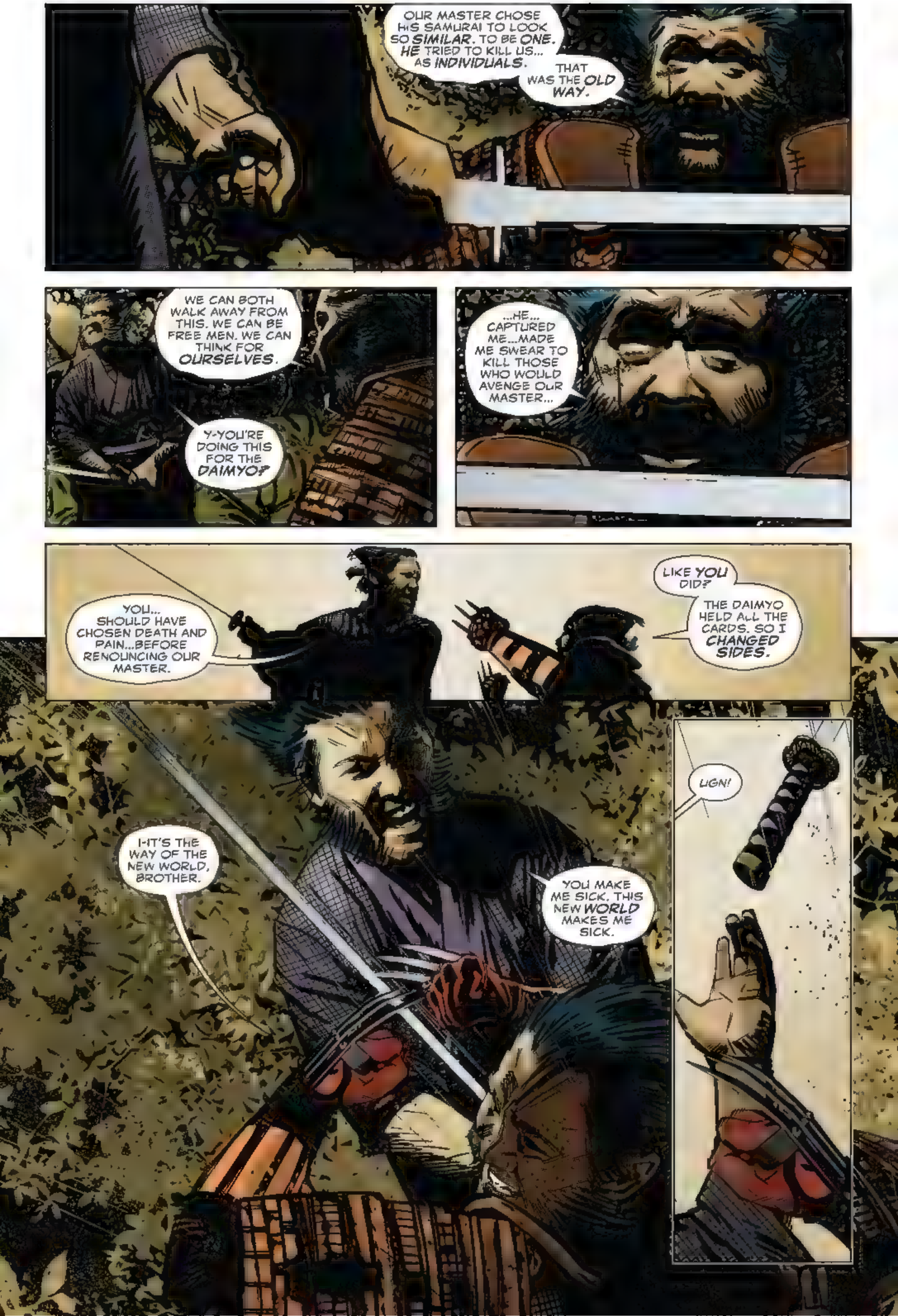

I SMELL IT.
SNIFF
DECAY.
HUMAN DECAY. GETTING STRONGER.
BY THE SPIRITS--
THE GRAVE IS DUG TOO SHALLOW FAR TOO SHALLOW.
THE GOD OF FOXES HAS ALREADY FEASTED HERE
SOMETHING... IN HERE .. SOMETHING .
H-HUHH?

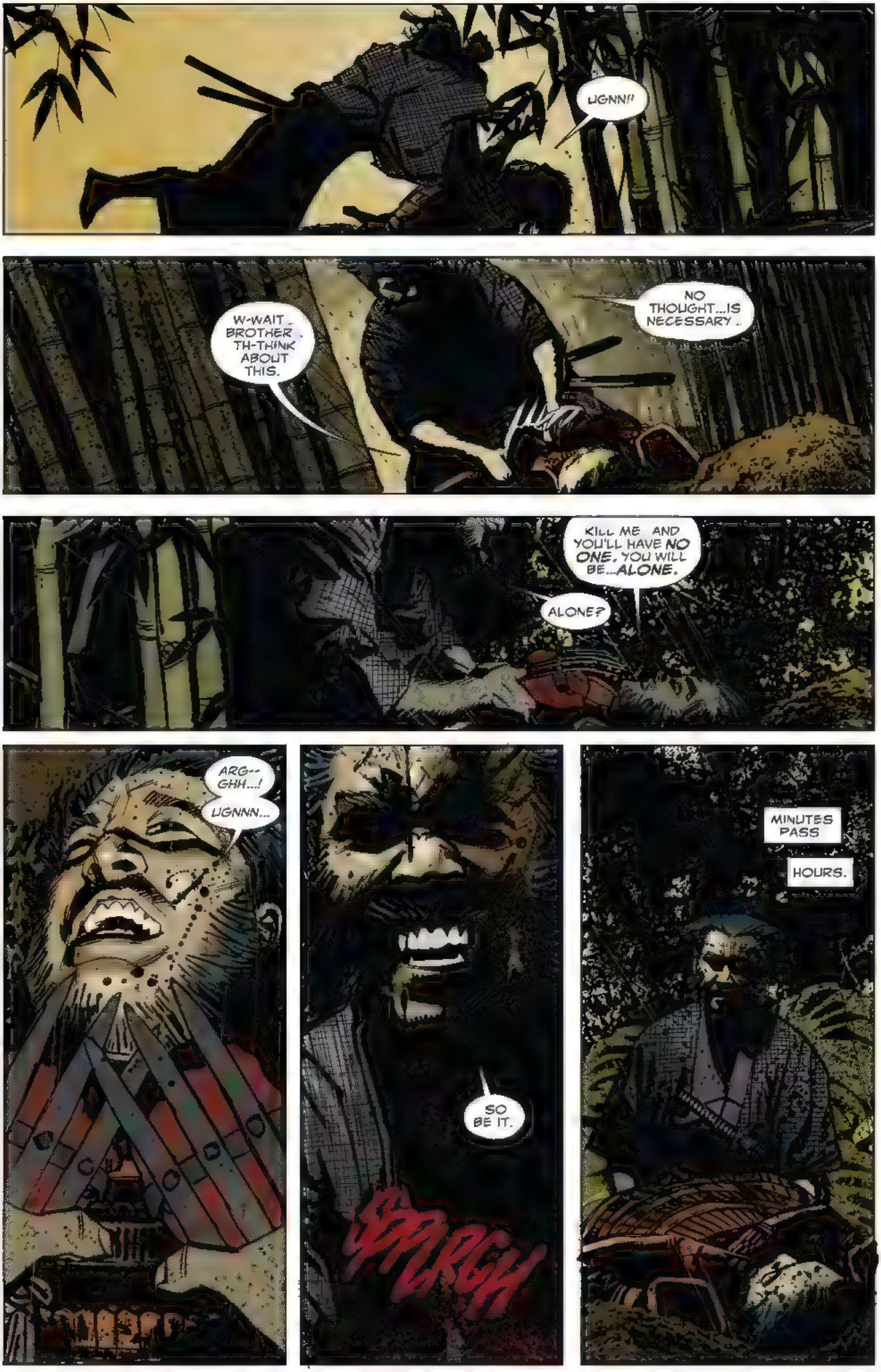

IN GOD'S NAME!
BROTHER... WHO...WHO DID THIS TO YOU? IF...IF ONLY YOU COULD SPEAK TO ME, BROTHER.
I WONDERED HOW LONG I'D HAVE TO WAIT.
BUT I KNEW YOU'D COME EVENTUALLY.
THIS IS WHERE IT ENDS

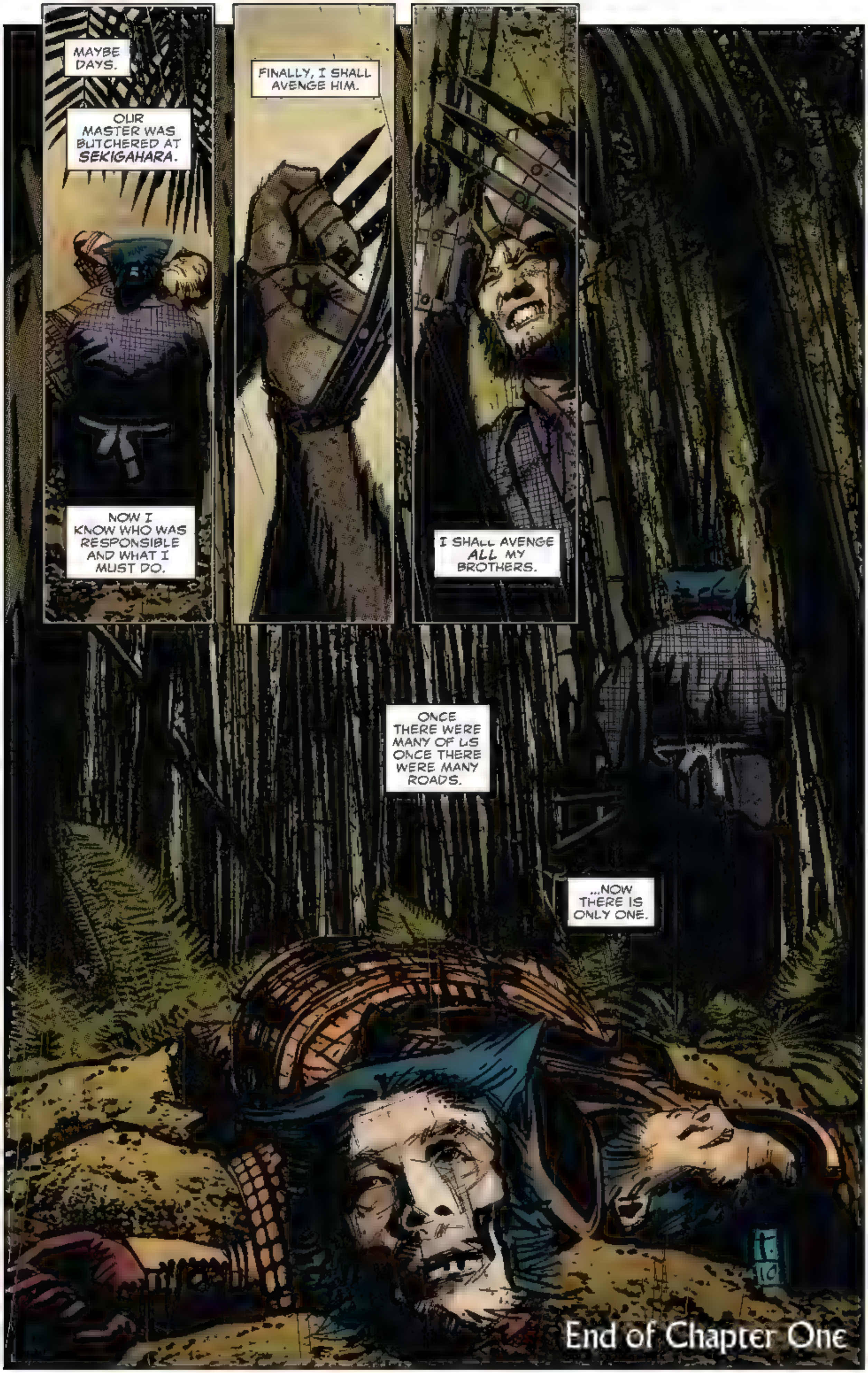

WHAT HAPPENED TO OUR BROTHER?
THE SAME AS SHALL HAPPEN TO YOU!
NOW BOW TO YOUR OWN FATE WITH DIGNITY AND I SWEAR THAT YOUR GRAVE SHALL BE BURIED WITH GREATER CARE.
YOU BASTARD
TELL ME, WHY DIDN'T YOU COME TO THE MEETING? YOU'VE NEVER MISSED ONE BEFORE.
WORRIED ABOUT ME, WERE YOU?


YOU... MADE A SACRED VOW TO AVENGE OUR MASTER.
KRSHHHHHH
WE **BOTH** MADE THAT VOW, BROTHER.
IT SEEMS WE **BOTH BROKE** IT.
ARGHH!
AGAIN, WHY DID YOU NOT COME TO THE **MEETING?**
NONE OF YOUR **BUSINESS**.
UGNN!
KRSHHH


LET ME GUESS, YOU'D GROWN TIRED...
TIRED OF OUR ENDLESS *TALK* ABOUT VENGEANCE.
UGNN!
N-NEVER MOVING ON...THE SAME FIGHT, OVER AND OVER...
IT WAS *MORE* THAN THAT.
I FOUND IT *DISGUSTING* TO LOOK AT MY *OWN FACE.*
YES! I FELT THE SAME WAY. EVERY TIME I LOOKED AT MY BROTHERS...I SAW MY *OWN SHAME*...I SAW MY MASTER UNAVENGED...
BROTHER, YOU WERE *RIGHT* TO CHOOSE A NEW ROAD. WE *BOTH* WERE...
NO. WHAT *YOU* DID...WAS DIFFERENT...
OUR MASTER DIDN'T *DESERVE* US. THE *DAIMYO* SHOWED ME THAT.
TH-THE *DAIMYO?*


OUR MASTER CHOSE HIS SAMURAI TO LOOK SO SIMILAR. TO BE ONE. HE TRIED TO KILL US... AS INDIVIDUALS.
THAT WAS THE OLD WAY.
WE CAN BOTH WALK AWAY FROM THIS. WE CAN BE FREE MEN. WE CAN THINK FOR OURSELVES.
Y-YOU'RE DOING THIS FOR THE DAIMYO?
...HE... CAPTURED ME...MADE ME SWEAR TO KILL THOSE WHO WOULD AVENGE OUR MASTER...
YOU... SHOULD HAVE CHOSEN DEATH AND PAIN...BEFORE RENOUNCING OUR MASTER.
LIKE YOU DID?
THE DAIMYO HELD ALL THE CARDS. SO I CHANGED SIDES.
I-IT'S THE WAY OF THE NEW WORLD, BROTHER.
YOU MAKE ME SICK. THIS NEW WORLD MAKES ME SICK.
UGN!


UGNN!!
W-WAIT.. BROTHER.. TH-THINK ABOUT THIS.
NO THOUGHT...IS NECESSARY..
KILL ME AND YOU'LL HAVE NO ONE. YOU WILL BE...ALONE.
ALONE?
ARG--GHH...!
UGNNN...
SO BE IT.
SPLRGH
MINUTES PASS
HOURS.


MAYBE DAYS.
OUR MASTER WAS BUTCHERED AT SEKIGAHARA.
NOW I KNOW WHO WAS RESPONSIBLE AND WHAT I MUST DO.
FINALLY, I SHALL AVENGE HIM.
I SHALL AVENGE ALL MY BROTHERS.
ONCE THERE WERE MANY OF US ONCE THERE WERE MANY ROADS.
...NOW THERE IS ONLY ONE.
End of Chapter One

5 RONIN
浪人

Chapter One: The Way Of The One

Writer:
Peter Milligan

Art:
Tomm Coker

Color Art:
Daniel Freedman

Letters:
VC's Joe Caramagna

Cover:
David Aja

Variant Cover:
John Cassaday

Editor:
Sebastian Girner

Editor in Chief:
Axel Alonso

Chief Creative Officer:
Joe Quesada

Publisher:
Dan Buckley

Exec. Producer:
Alan Fine

Special Thanks to Yukiko Murakami

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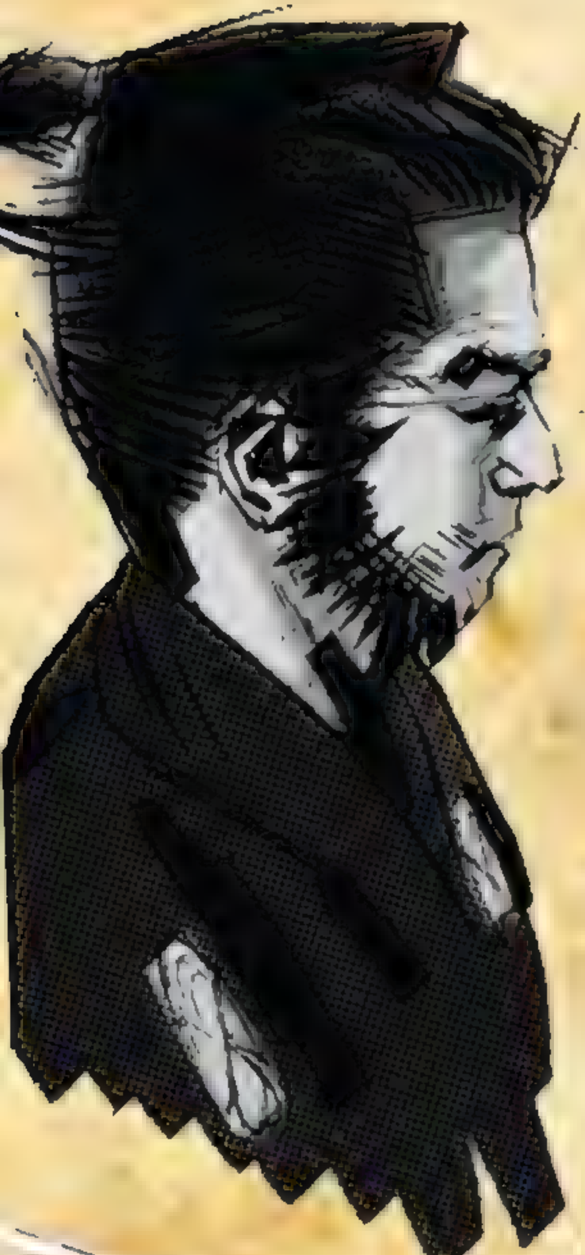
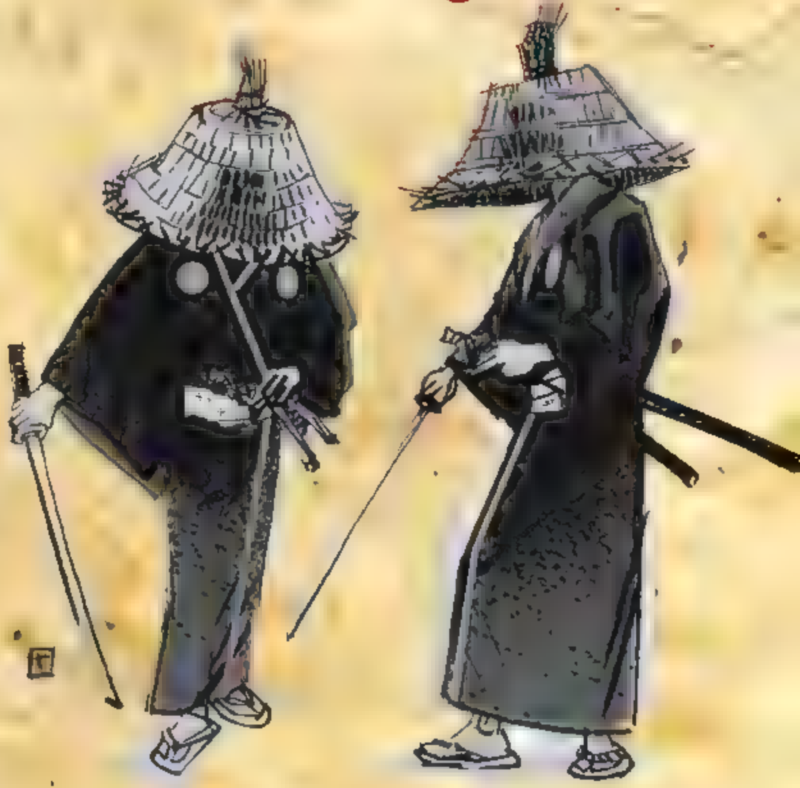
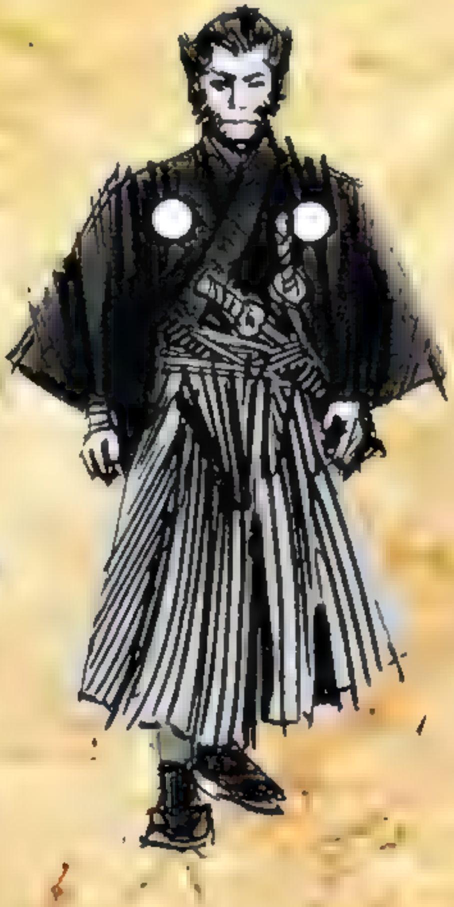
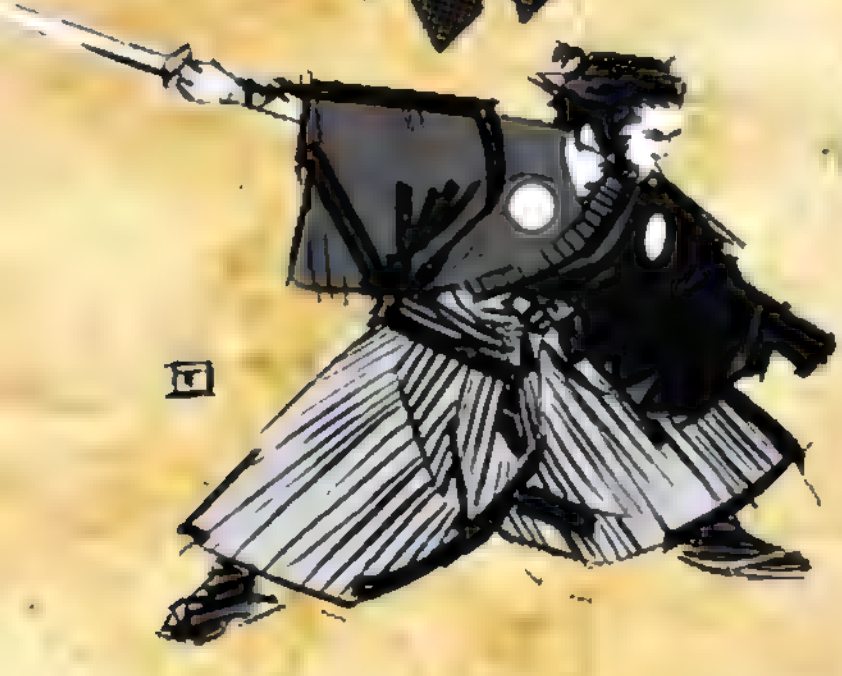
Character Sketches by Tomm Coker

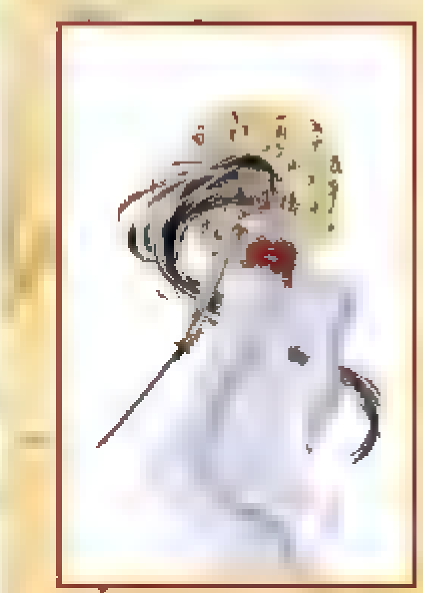




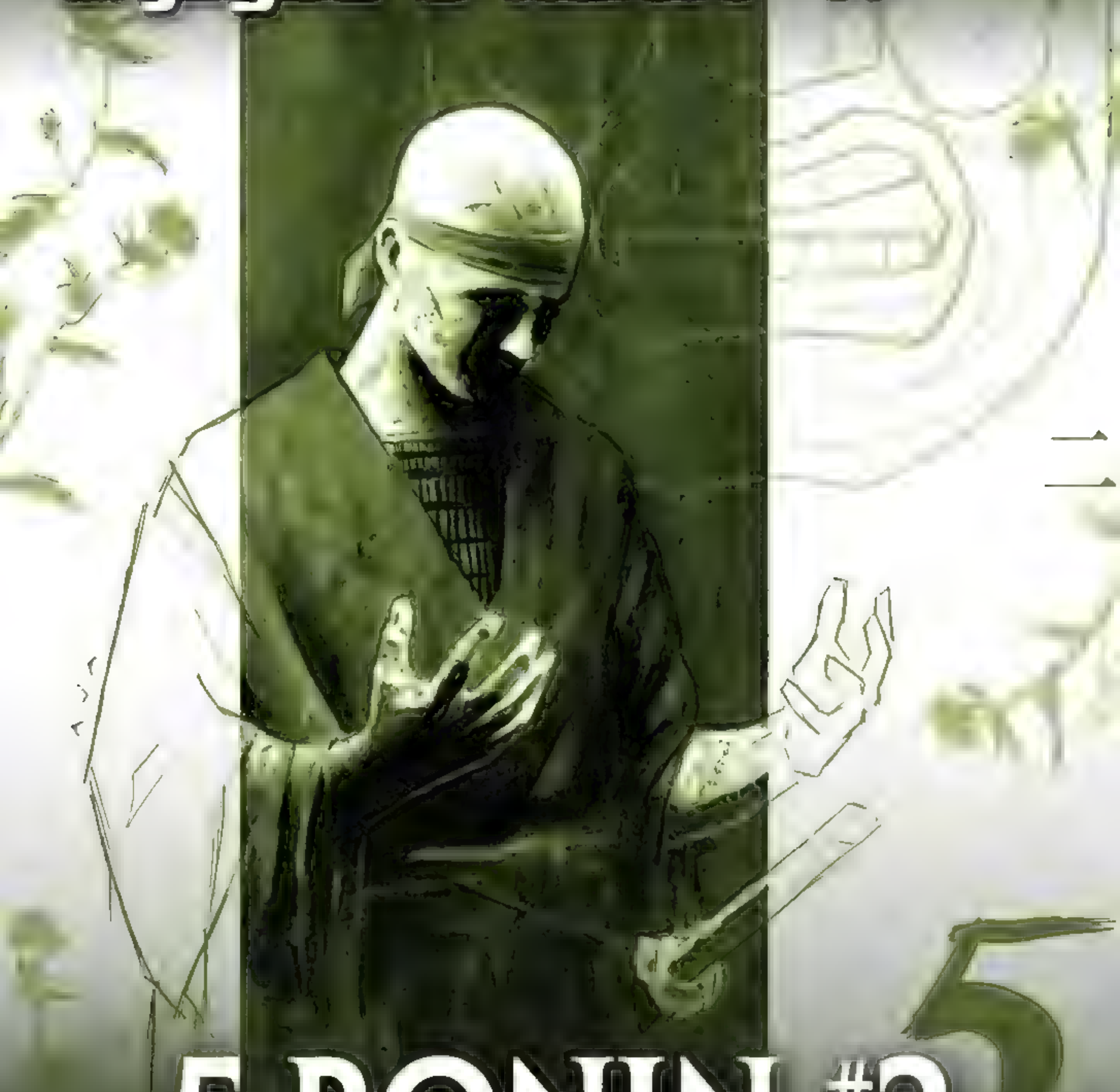




NEXT: THE HULK!



Enjoyed 5 RONIN #1?



5 RONIN #2

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MARVEL
LIMITED SERIES
2 of 5

MILLIGAN
TALAJIĆ
LOUGHRIDGE

"I'M AFRAID YOU
WILL BE DISAPPOINTED.
BUT THEN, ALL LIFE IS BUT
A PREPARATION FOR
DISAPPOINTMENT."

二 HULK

5 RONIN™ 浪人

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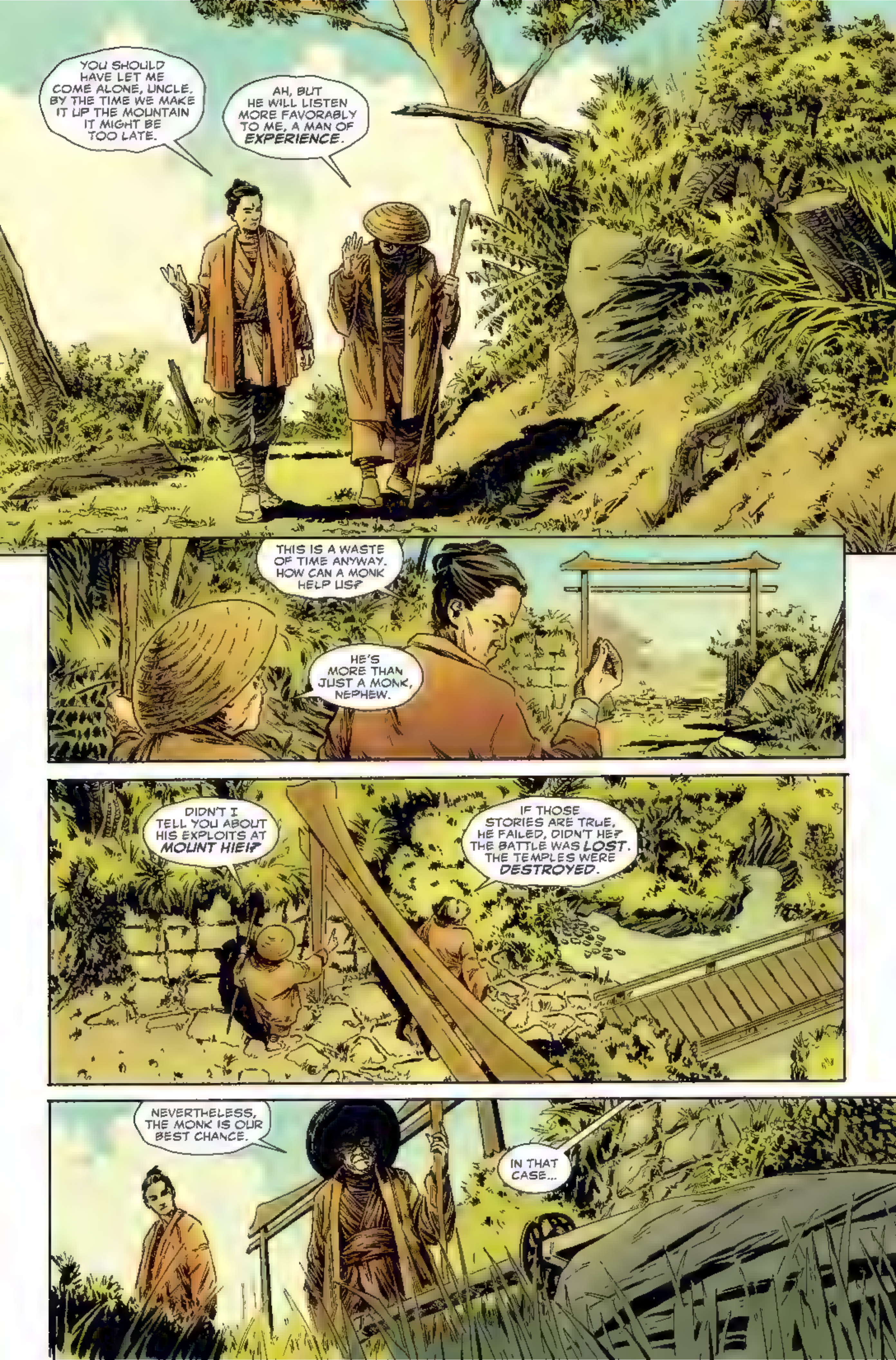
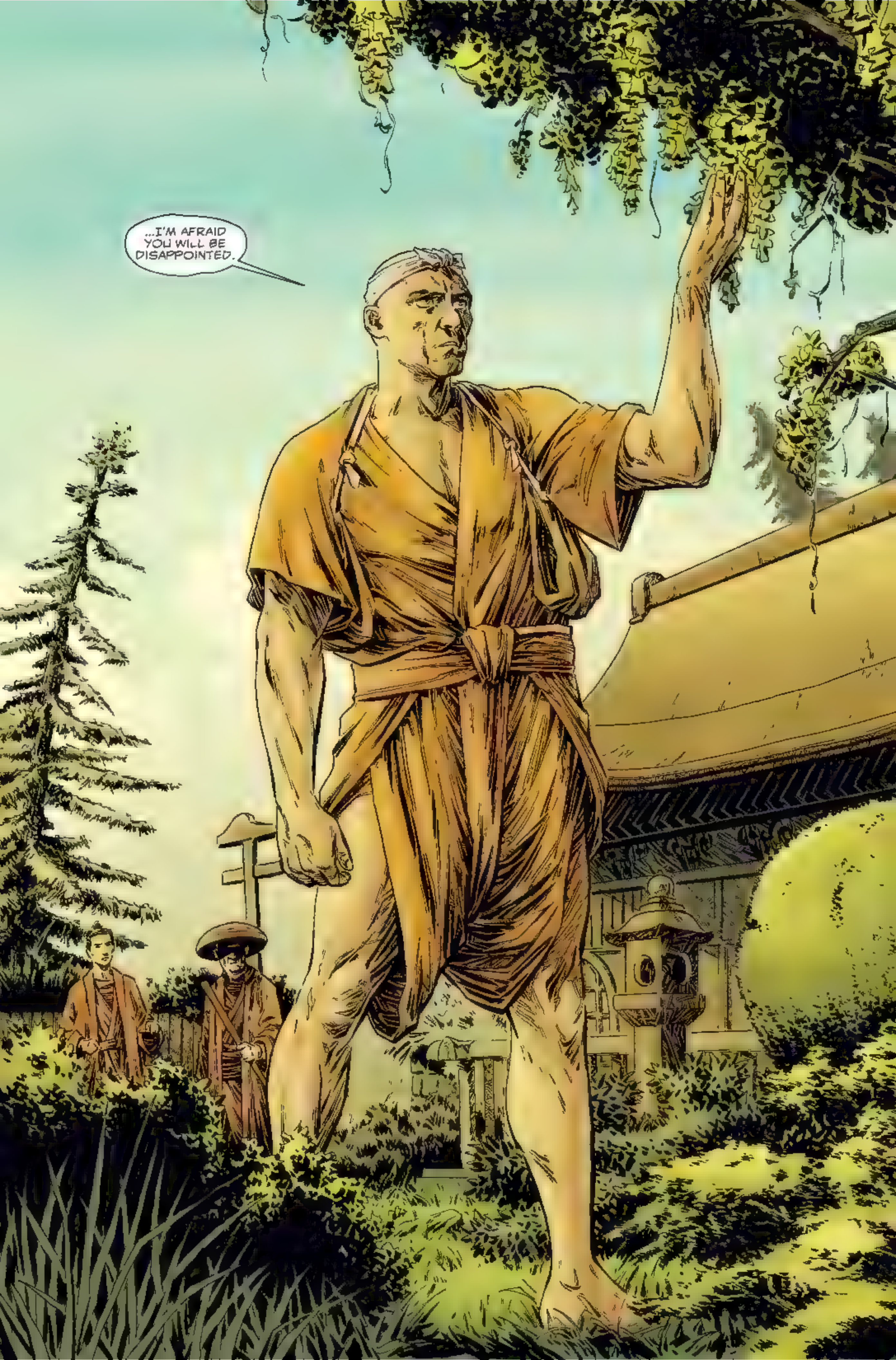
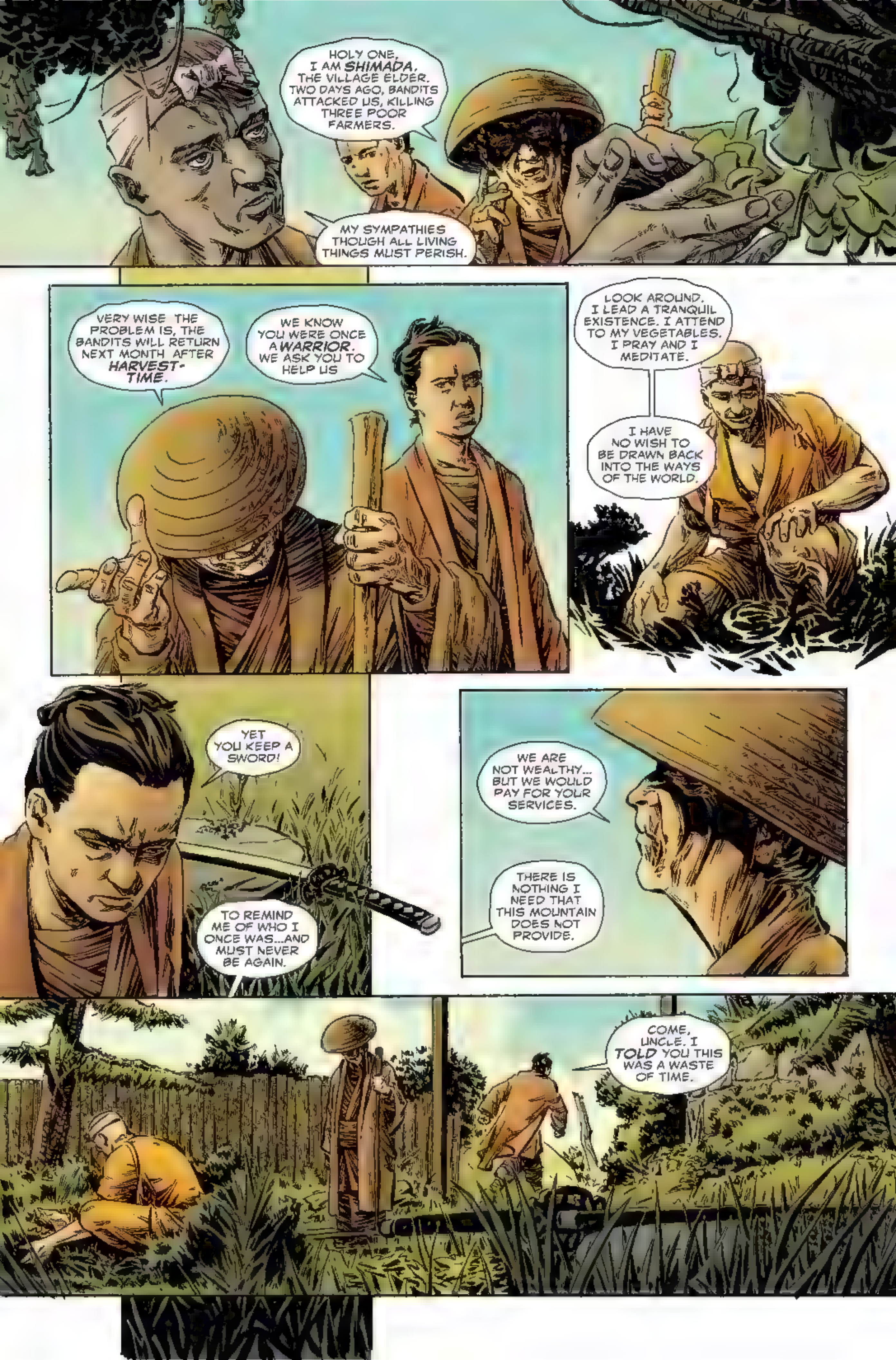
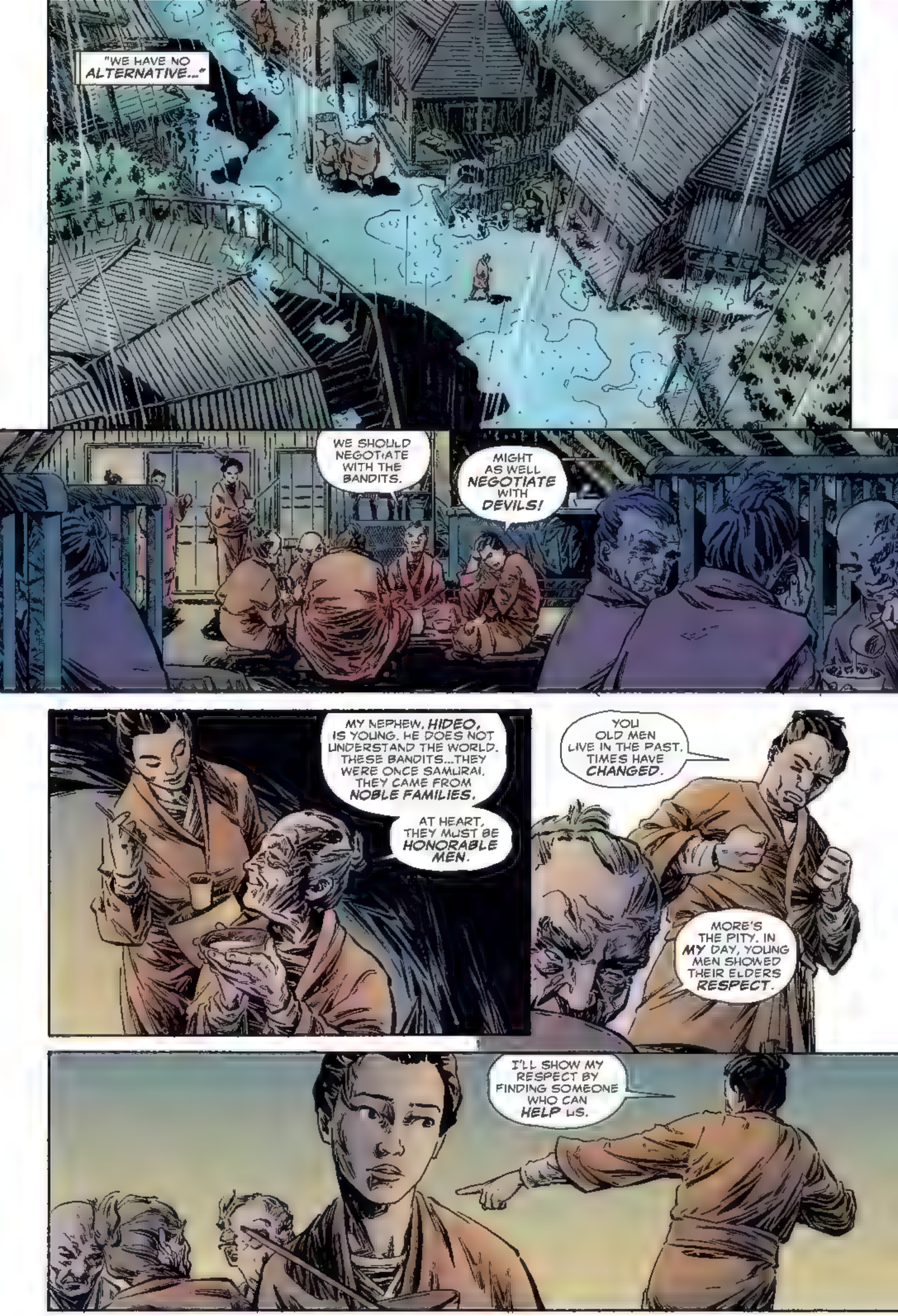
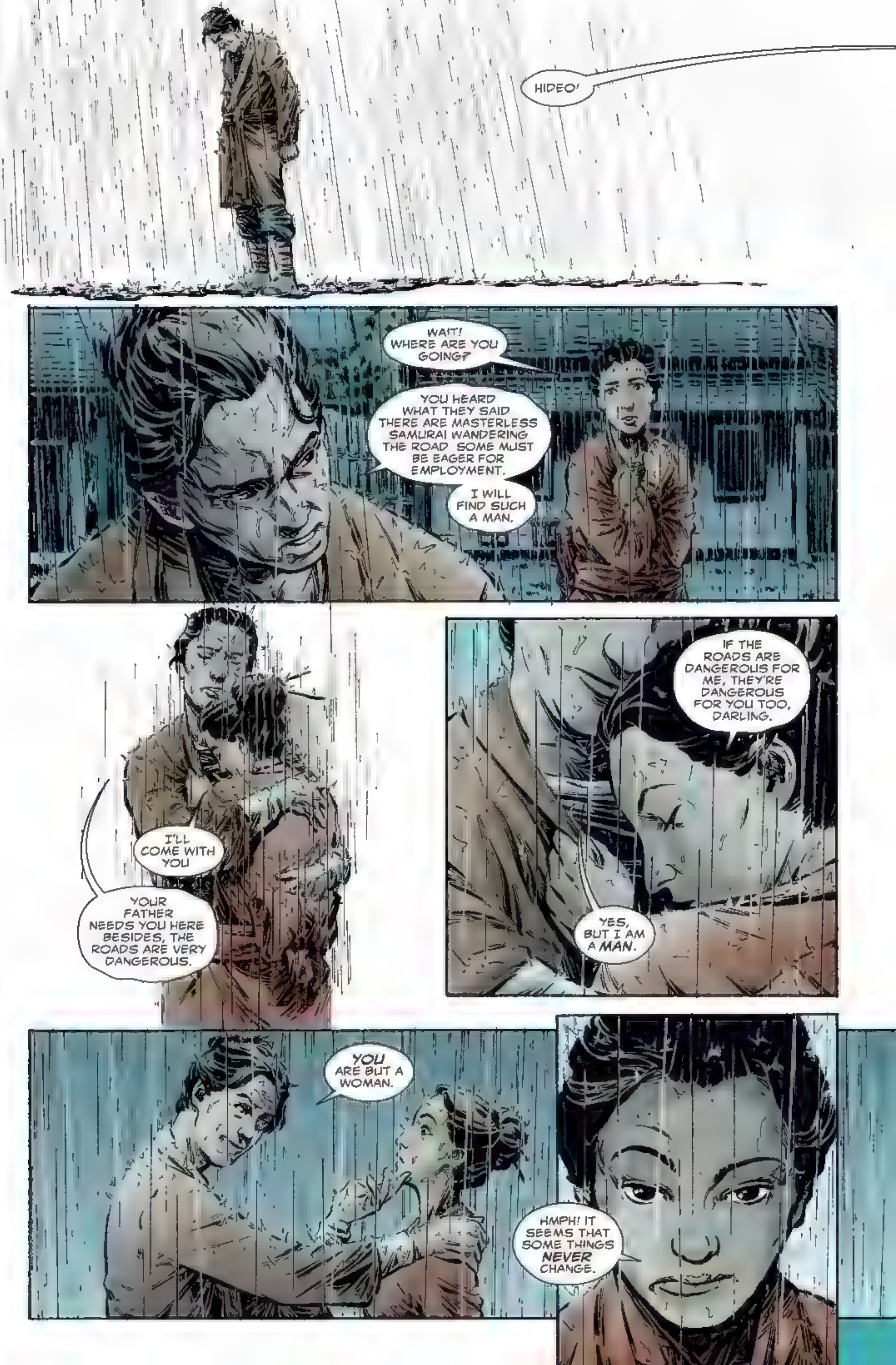
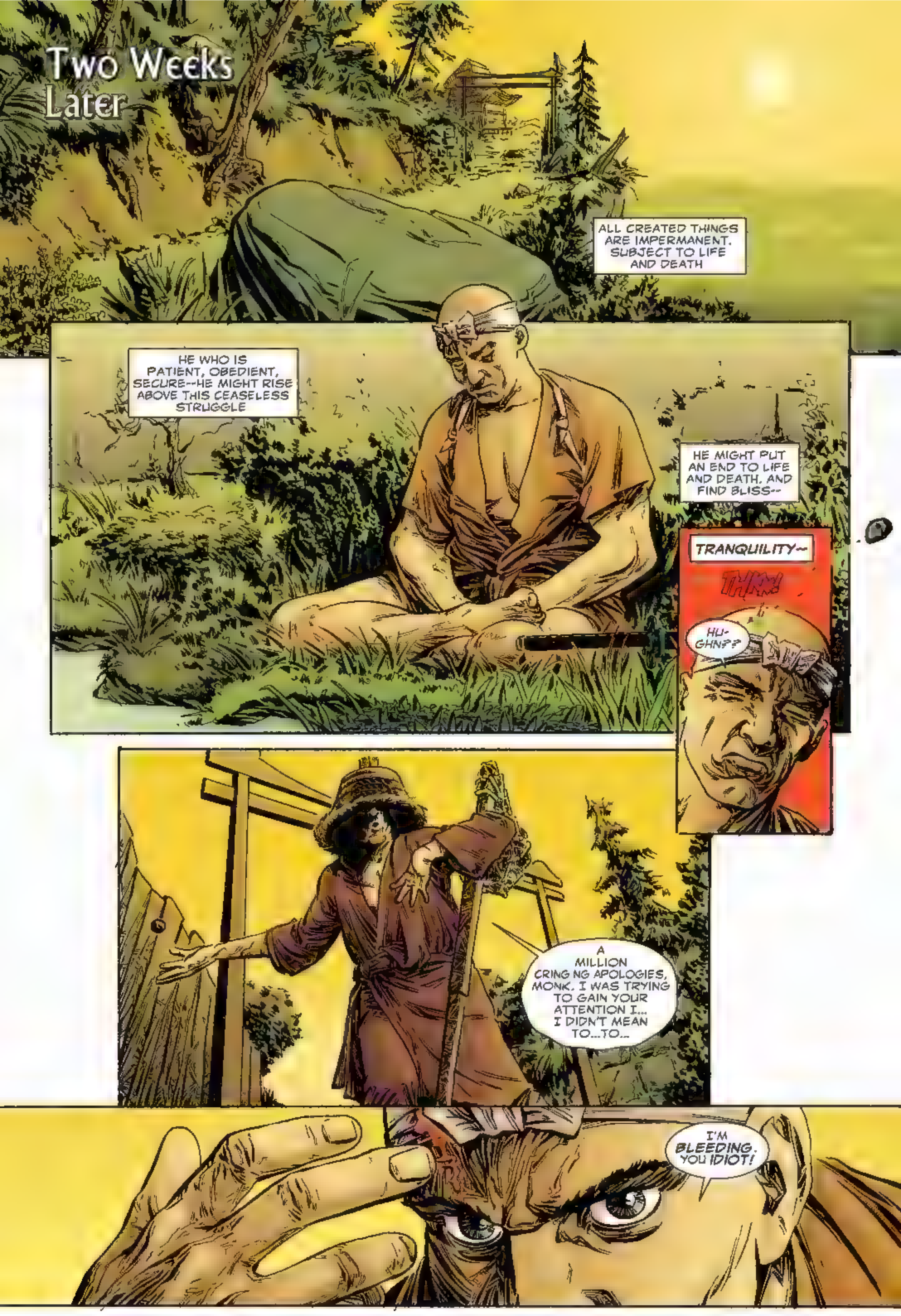

YOU SHOULD HAVE LET ME COME ALONE, UNCLE. BY THE TIME WE MAKE IT UP THE MOUNTAIN IT MIGHT BE TOO LATE.
AH, BUT HE WILL LISTEN MORE FAVORABLY TO ME, A MAN OF *EXPERIENCE*.
THIS IS A WASTE OF TIME ANYWAY. HOW CAN A MONK HELP US?
HE'S MORE THAN JUST A MONK, NEPHEW.
DIDN'T I TELL YOU ABOUT HIS EXPLOITS AT *MOUNT HIEI?*
IF THOSE STORIES ARE TRUE, HE FAILED, DIDN'T HE? THE BATTLE WAS *LOST*. THE TEMPLES WERE *DESTROYED*.
NEVERTHELESS, THE MONK IS OUR BEST CHANCE.
IN THAT CASE...

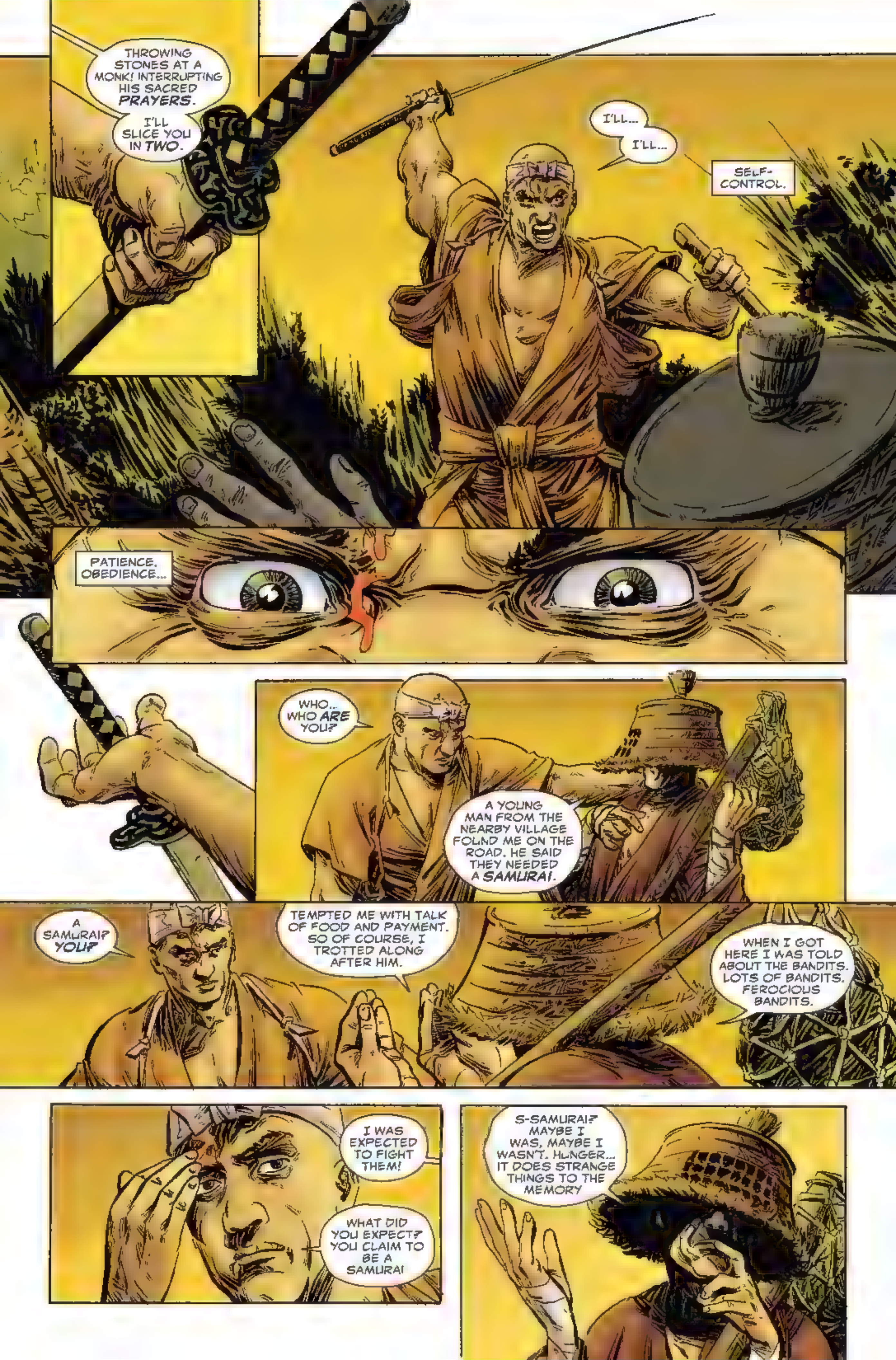

...I'M AFRAID YOU WILL BE DISAPPOINTED.

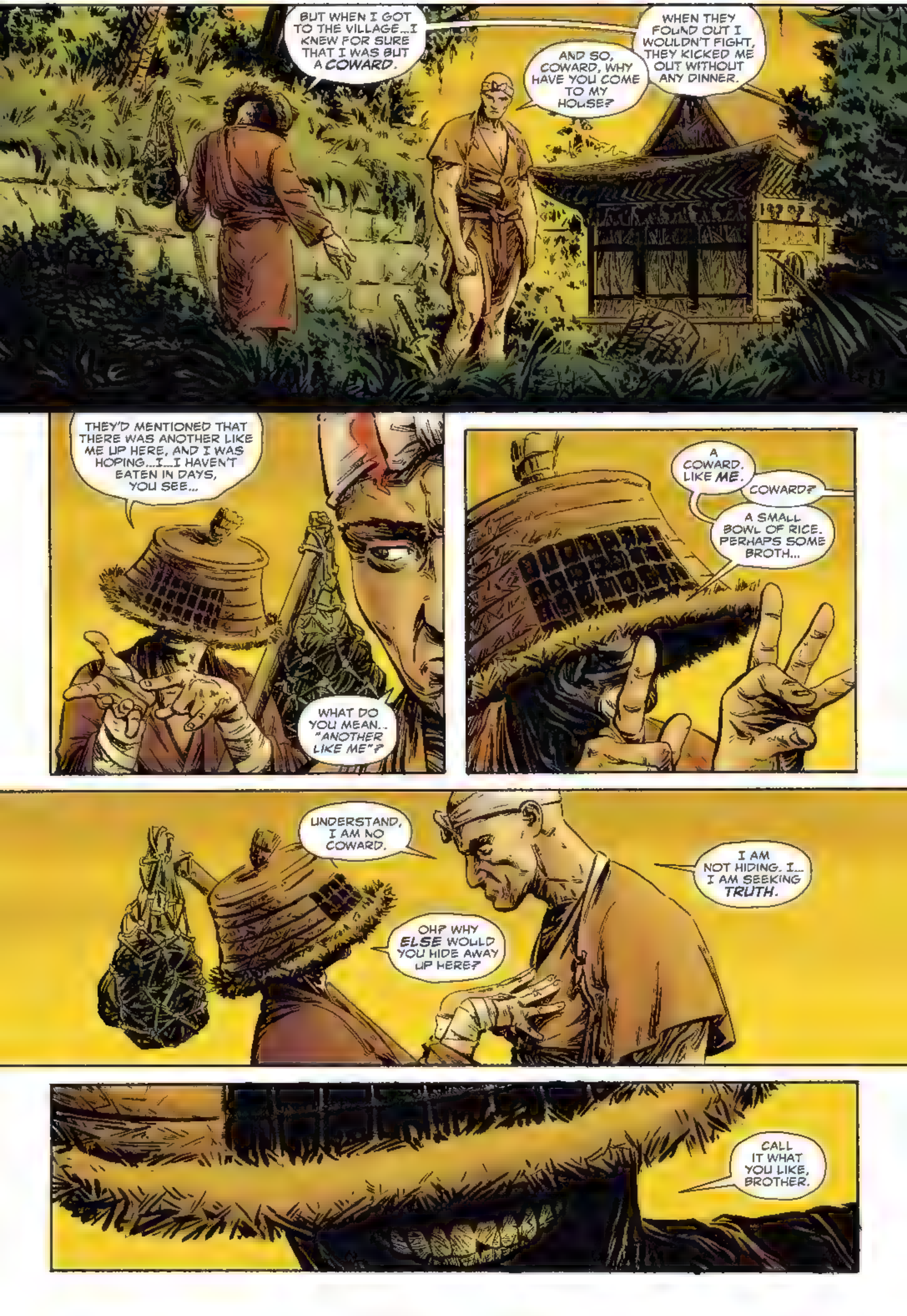

HOLY ONE, I AM **SHIMADA**, THE VILLAGE ELDER. TWO DAYS AGO, BANDITS ATTACKED US, KILLING THREE POOR FARMERS.
MY SYMPATHIES THOUGH ALL LIVING THINGS MUST PERISH.
VERY WISE THE PROBLEM IS, THE BANDITS WILL RETURN NEXT MONTH AFTER **HARVEST-TIME**.
WE KNOW YOU WERE ONCE A **WARRIOR**. WE ASK YOU TO HELP US
LOOK AROUND. I LEAD A TRANQUIL EXISTENCE. I ATTEND TO MY VEGETABLES. I PRAY AND I MEDITATE.
I HAVE NO WISH TO BE DRAWN BACK INTO THE WAYS OF THE WORLD.
YET YOU KEEP A SWORD!
TO REMIND ME OF WHO I ONCE WAS...AND MUST NEVER BE AGAIN.
WE ARE NOT WEALTHY... BUT WE WOULD PAY FOR YOUR SERVICES.
THERE IS NOTHING I NEED THAT THIS MOUNTAIN DOES NOT PROVIDE.
COME, UNCLE. I **TOLD** YOU THIS WAS A WASTE OF TIME.

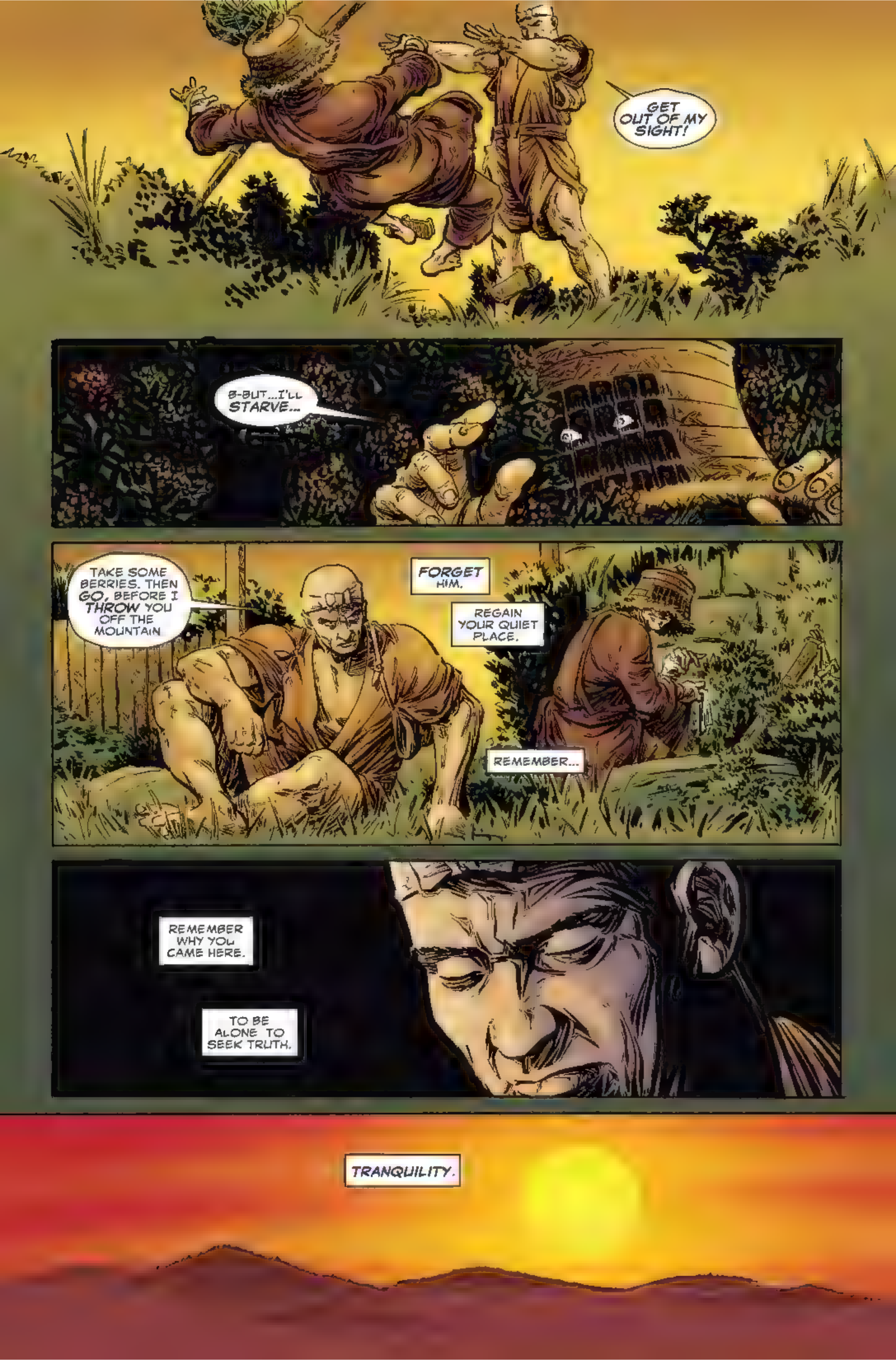

"WE HAVE NO ALTERNATIVE..."
WE SHOULD NEGOTIATE WITH THE BANDITS.
MIGHT AS WELL NEGOTIATE WITH DEVILS!
MY NEPHEW, HIDEO, IS YOUNG. HE DOES NOT UNDERSTAND THE WORLD. THESE BANDITS...THEY WERE ONCE SAMURAI. THEY CAME FROM NOBLE FAMILIES.
AT HEART, THEY MUST BE HONORABLE MEN.
YOU OLD MEN LIVE IN THE PAST. TIMES HAVE CHANGED.
MORE'S THE PITY. IN MY DAY, YOUNG MEN SHOWED THEIR ELDERS RESPECT.
I'LL SHOW MY RESPECT BY FINDING SOMEONE WHO CAN HELP US.

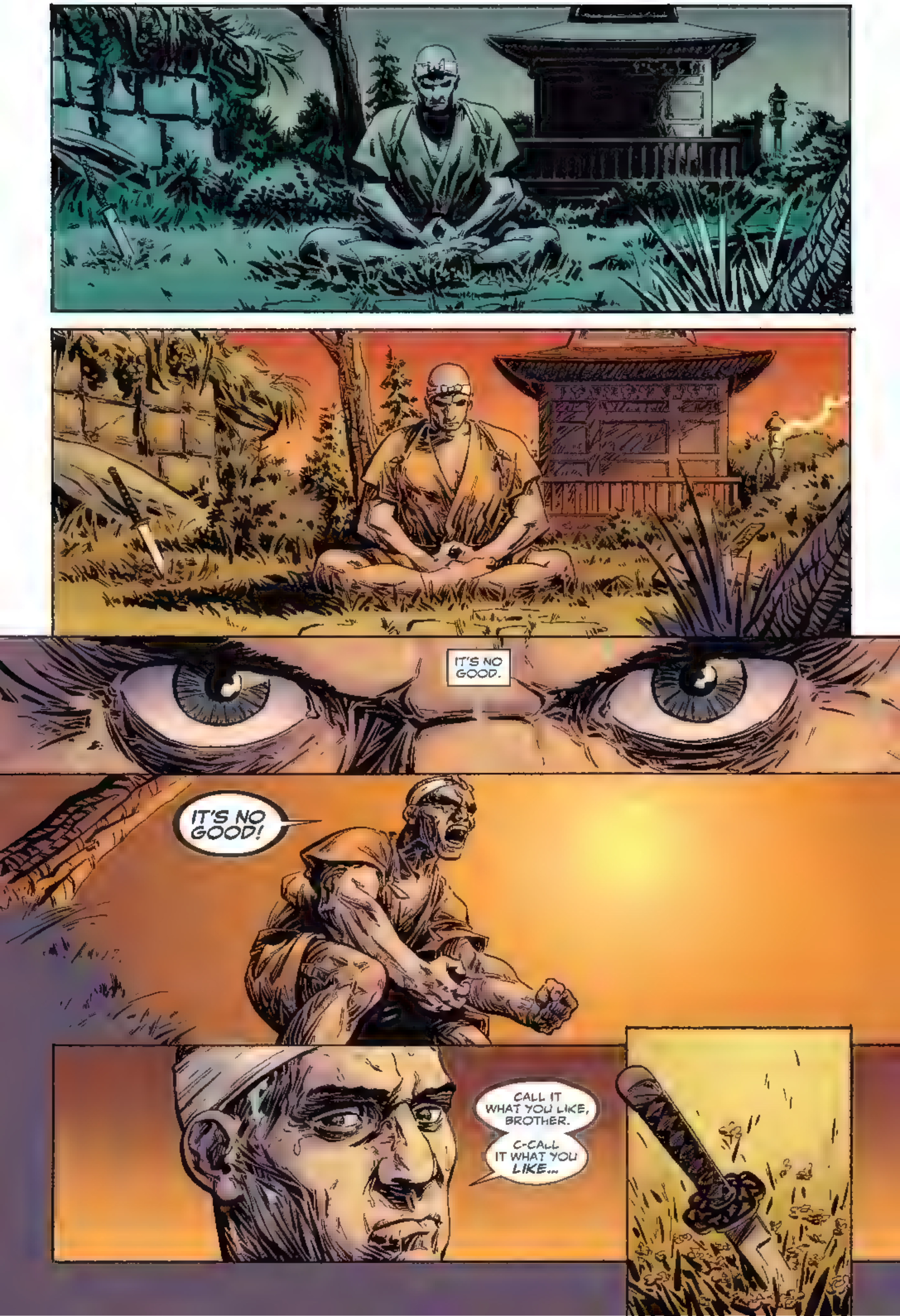

HIDEO!
WAIT! WHERE ARE YOU GOING?
YOU HEARD WHAT THEY SAID THERE ARE MASTERLESS SAMURAI WANDERING THE ROAD SOME MUST BE EAGER FOR EMPLOYMENT.
I WILL FIND SUCH A MAN.
I'LL COME WITH YOU
YOUR FATHER NEEDS YOU HERE BESIDES, THE ROADS ARE VERY DANGEROUS.
IF THE ROADS ARE DANGEROUS FOR ME, THEY'RE DANGEROUS FOR YOU TOO, DARLING.
YES, BUT I AM A MAN.
YOU ARE BUT A WOMAN.
HMPH! IT SEEMS THAT SOME THINGS NEVER CHANGE.

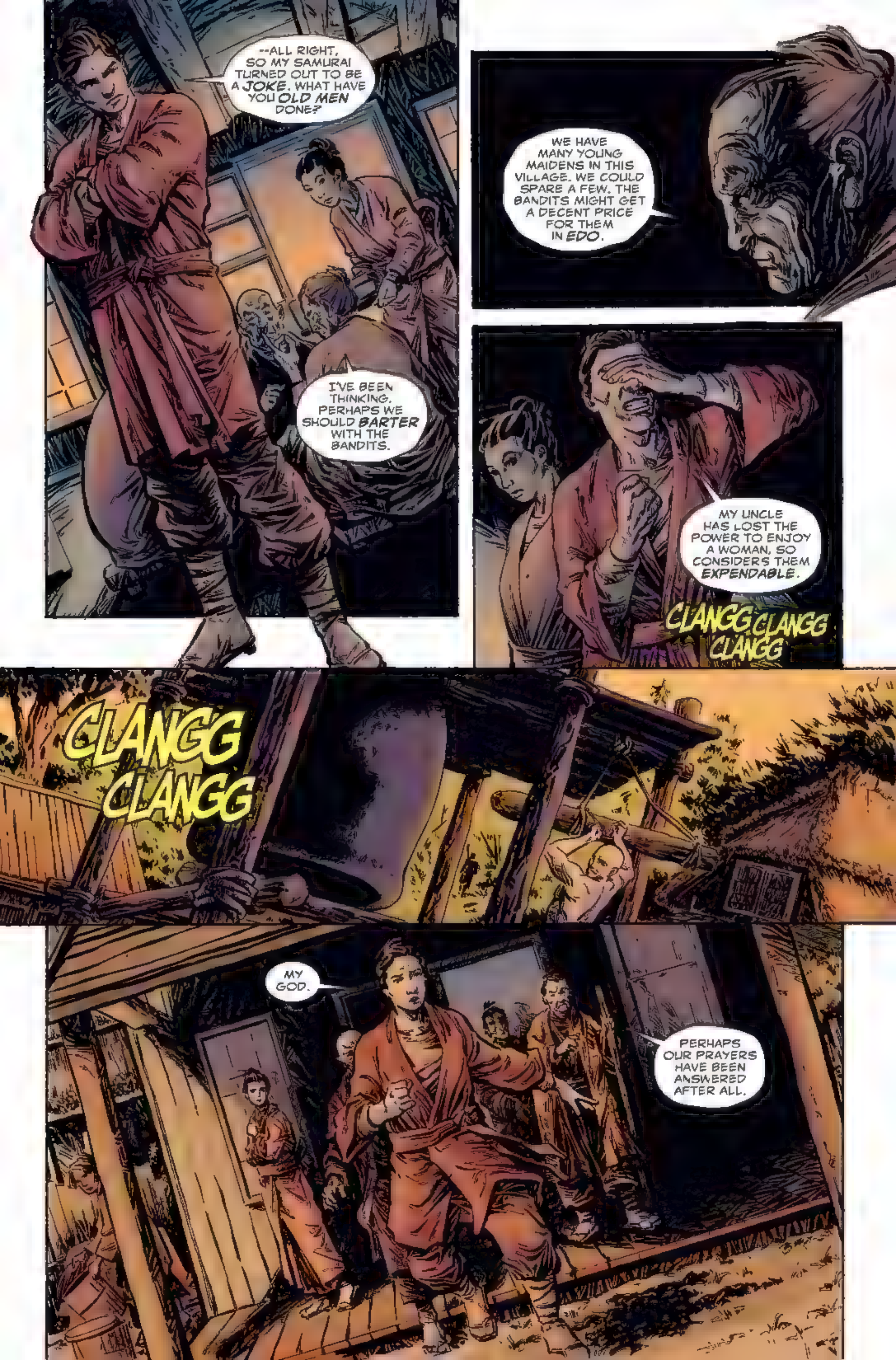

Two Weeks Later
ALL CREATED THINGS ARE IMPERMANENT, SUBJECT TO LIFE AND DEATH
HE WHO IS PATIENT, OBEDIENT, SECURE--HE MIGHT RISE ABOVE THIS CEASELESS STRUGGLE
HE MIGHT PUT AN END TO LIFE AND DEATH, AND FIND BLISS--
TRANQUILITY--
THKK!
HU-GHN??
A MILLION CRINGING APOLOGIES, MONK. I WAS TRYING TO GAIN YOUR ATTENTION I... I DIDN'T MEAN TO...TO...
I'M BLEEDING, YOU IDIOT!

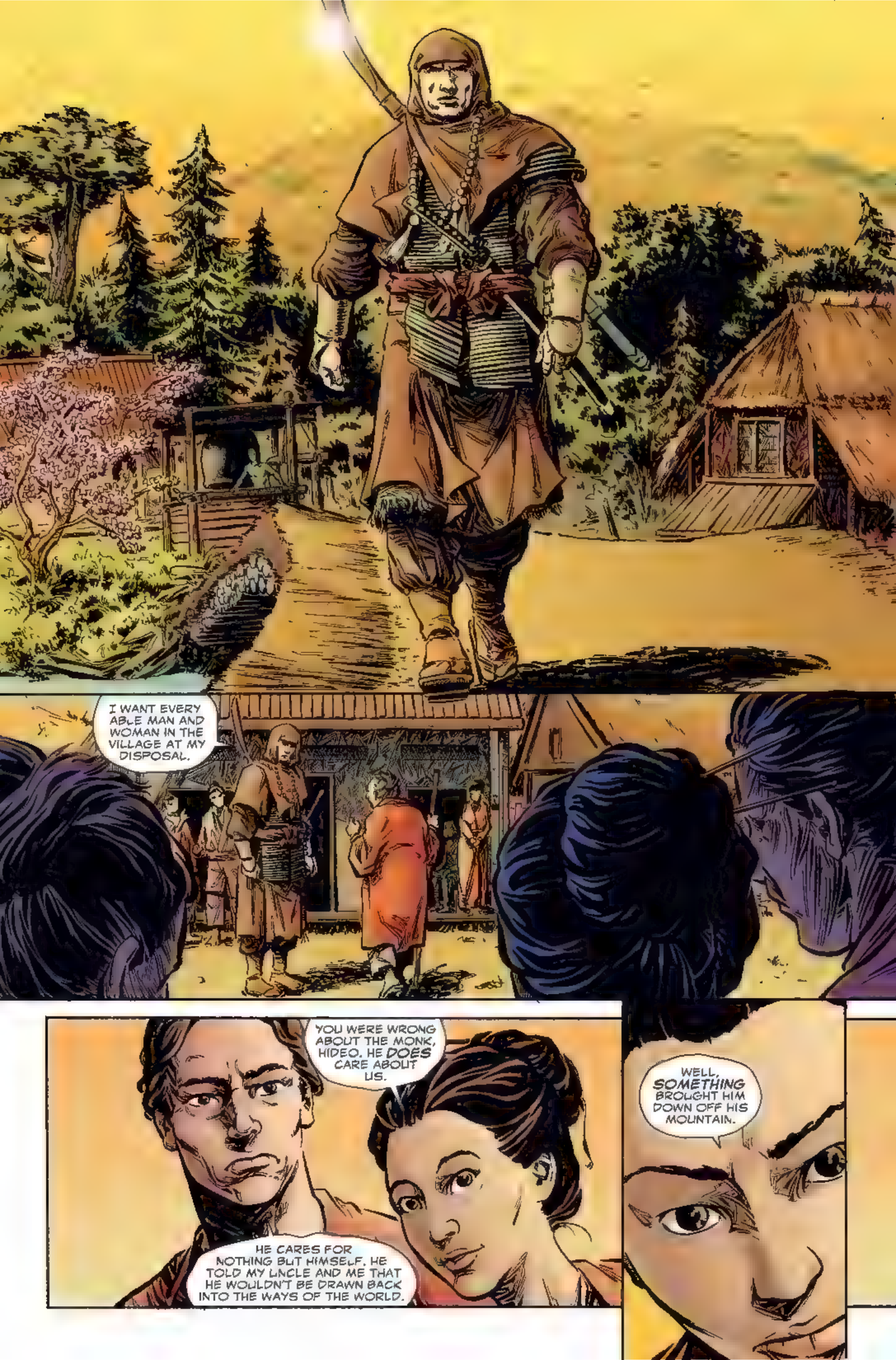

THROWING STONES AT A MONK! INTERRUPTING HIS SACRED PRAYERS.
I'LL SLICE YOU IN TWO.
I'LL...
I'LL...
SELF-CONTROL.
PATIENCE. OBEDIENCE...
WHO.. WHO ARE YOU?
A YOUNG MAN FROM THE NEARBY VILLAGE FOUND ME ON THE ROAD. HE SAID THEY NEEDED A SAMURAI.
A SAMURAI? YOU?
TEMPTED ME WITH TALK OF FOOD AND PAYMENT. SO OF COURSE, I TROTTED ALONG AFTER HIM.
WHEN I GOT HERE I WAS TOLD ABOUT THE BANDITS. LOTS OF BANDITS. FEROCIOUS BANDITS.
I WAS EXPECTED TO FIGHT THEM!
WHAT DID YOU EXPECT? YOU CLAIM TO BE A SAMURAI
S-SAMURAI? MAYBE I WAS, MAYBE I WASN'T. HUNGER... IT DOES STRANGE THINGS TO THE MEMORY

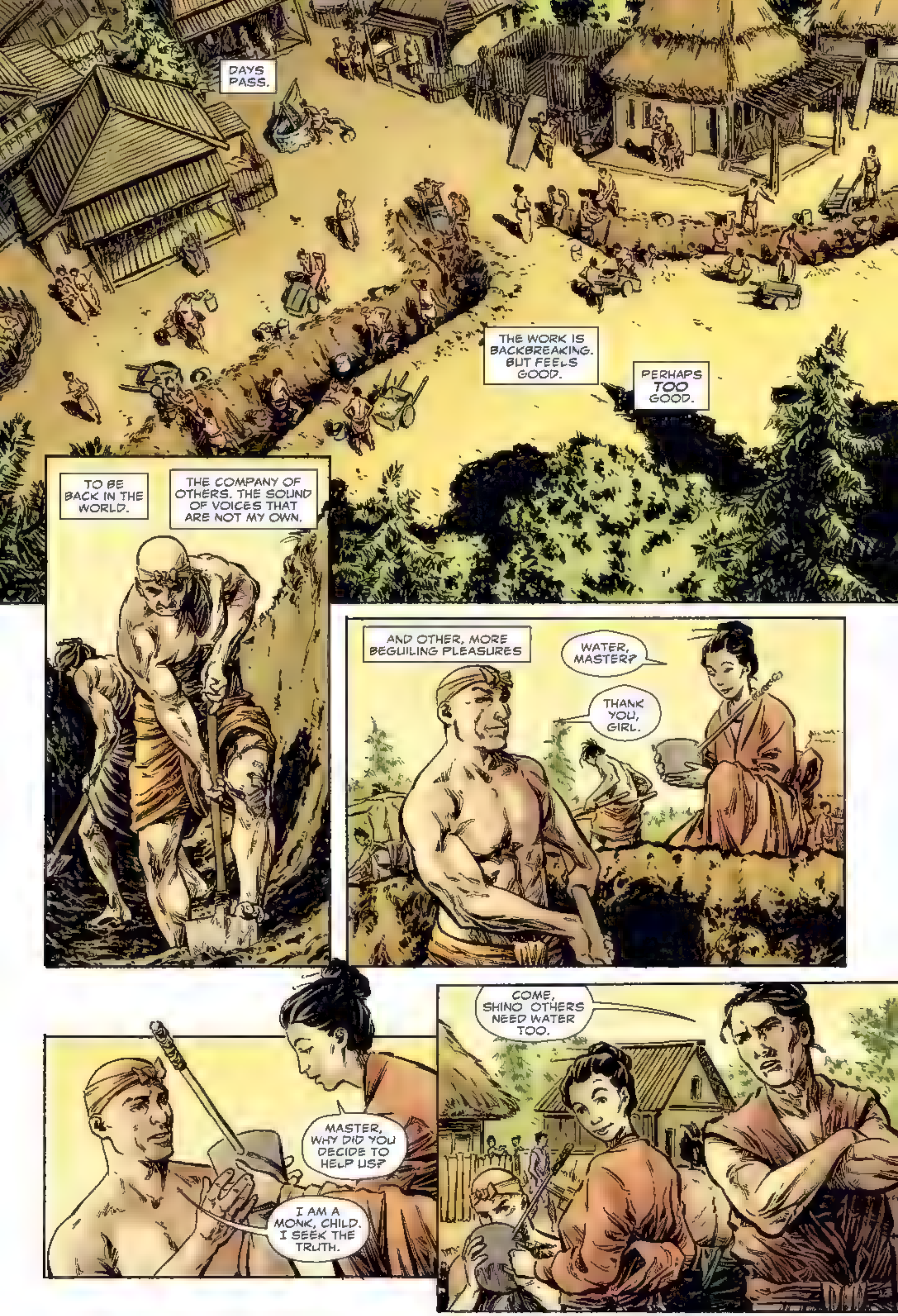

BUT WHEN I GOT TO THE VILLAGE...I KNEW FOR SURE THAT I WAS BUT A *COWARD*.
WHEN THEY FOUND OUT I WOULDN'T FIGHT, THEY KICKED ME OUT WITHOUT ANY DINNER.
AND SO, COWARD, WHY HAVE YOU COME TO MY HOUSE?
THEY'D MENTIONED THAT THERE WAS ANOTHER LIKE ME UP HERE, AND I WAS HOPING...I...I HAVEN'T EATEN IN DAYS, YOU SEE...
WHAT DO YOU MEAN... "ANOTHER LIKE ME"?
A COWARD. LIKE *ME*.
COWARD?
A SMALL BOWL OF RICE. PERHAPS SOME BROTH...
UNDERSTAND, I AM NO COWARD.
I AM NOT HIDING. I... I AM SEEKING *TRUTH*.
OH? WHY *ELSE* WOULD YOU HIDE AWAY UP HERE?
CALL IT WHAT YOU LIKE, BROTHER.

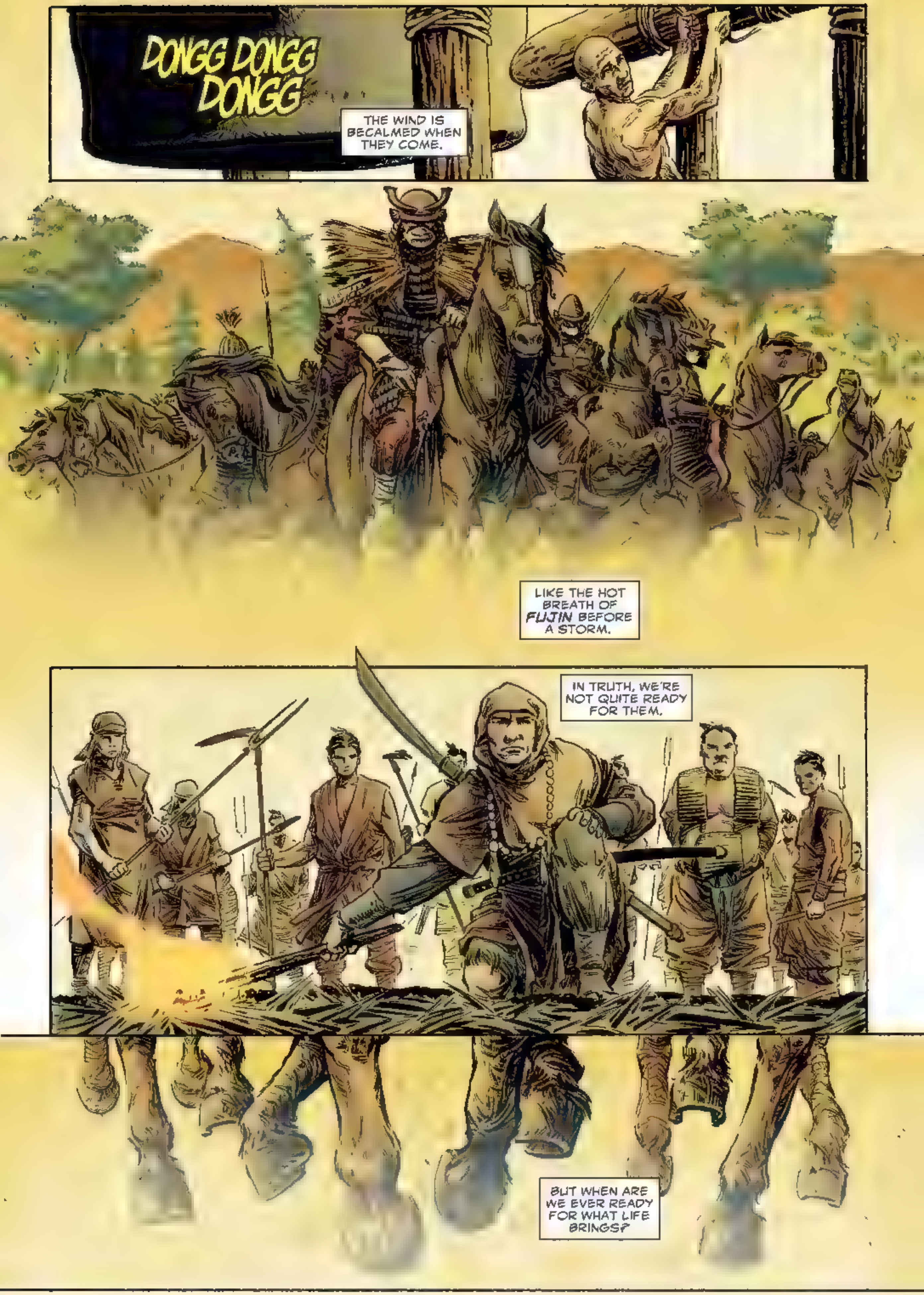

GET OUT OF MY SIGHT!
B-BUT...I'LL STARVE...
TAKE SOME BERRIES. THEN GO, BEFORE I THROW YOU OFF THE MOUNTAIN
FORGET HIM.
REGAIN YOUR QUIET PLACE.
REMEMBER...
REMEMBER WHY YOU CAME HERE.
TO BE ALONE TO SEEK TRUTH.
TRANQUILITY.

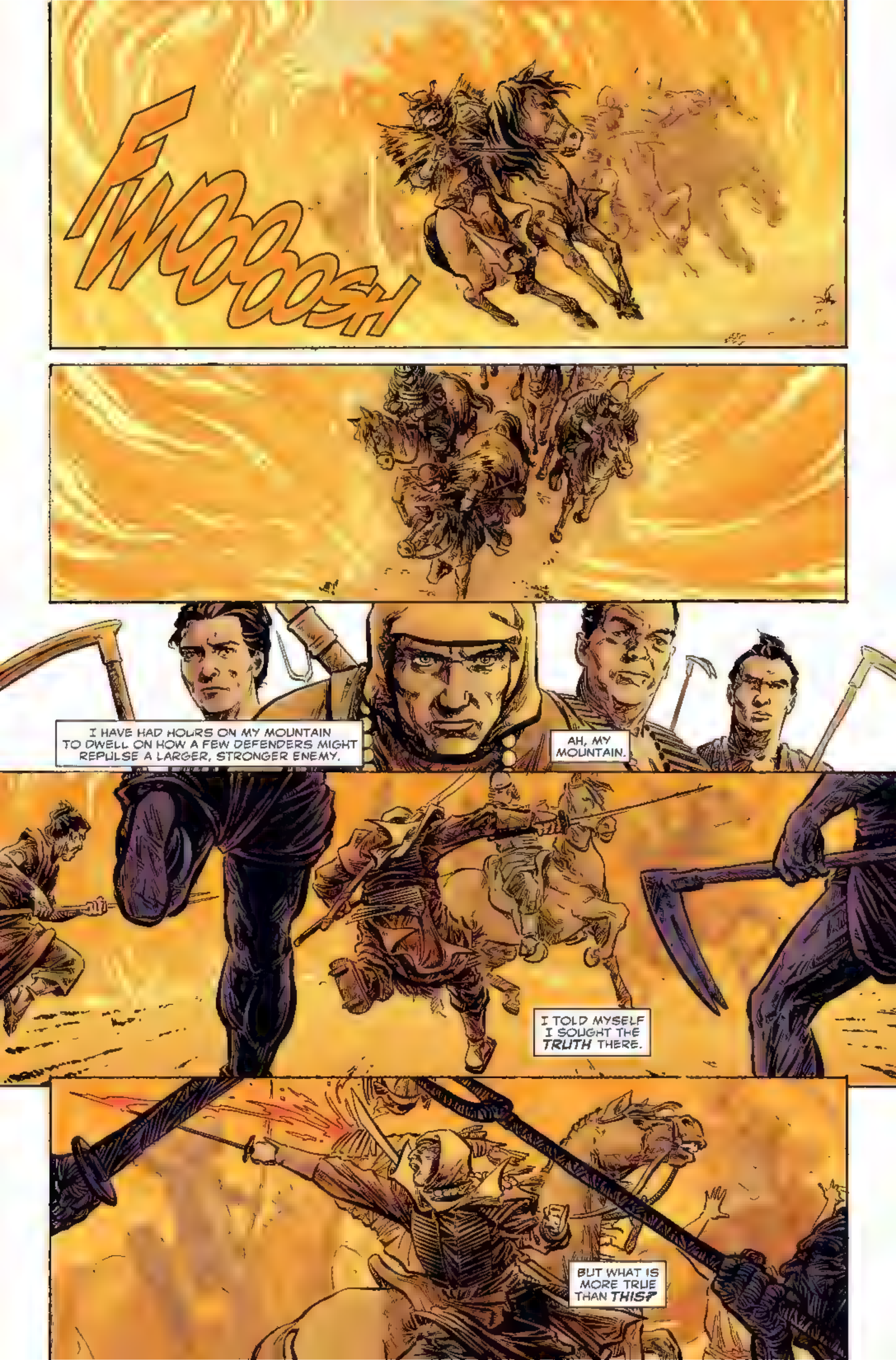

IT'S NO GOOD.
IT'S NO GOOD!
CALL IT WHAT YOU LIKE, BROTHER.
C-CALL IT WHAT YOU LIKE...

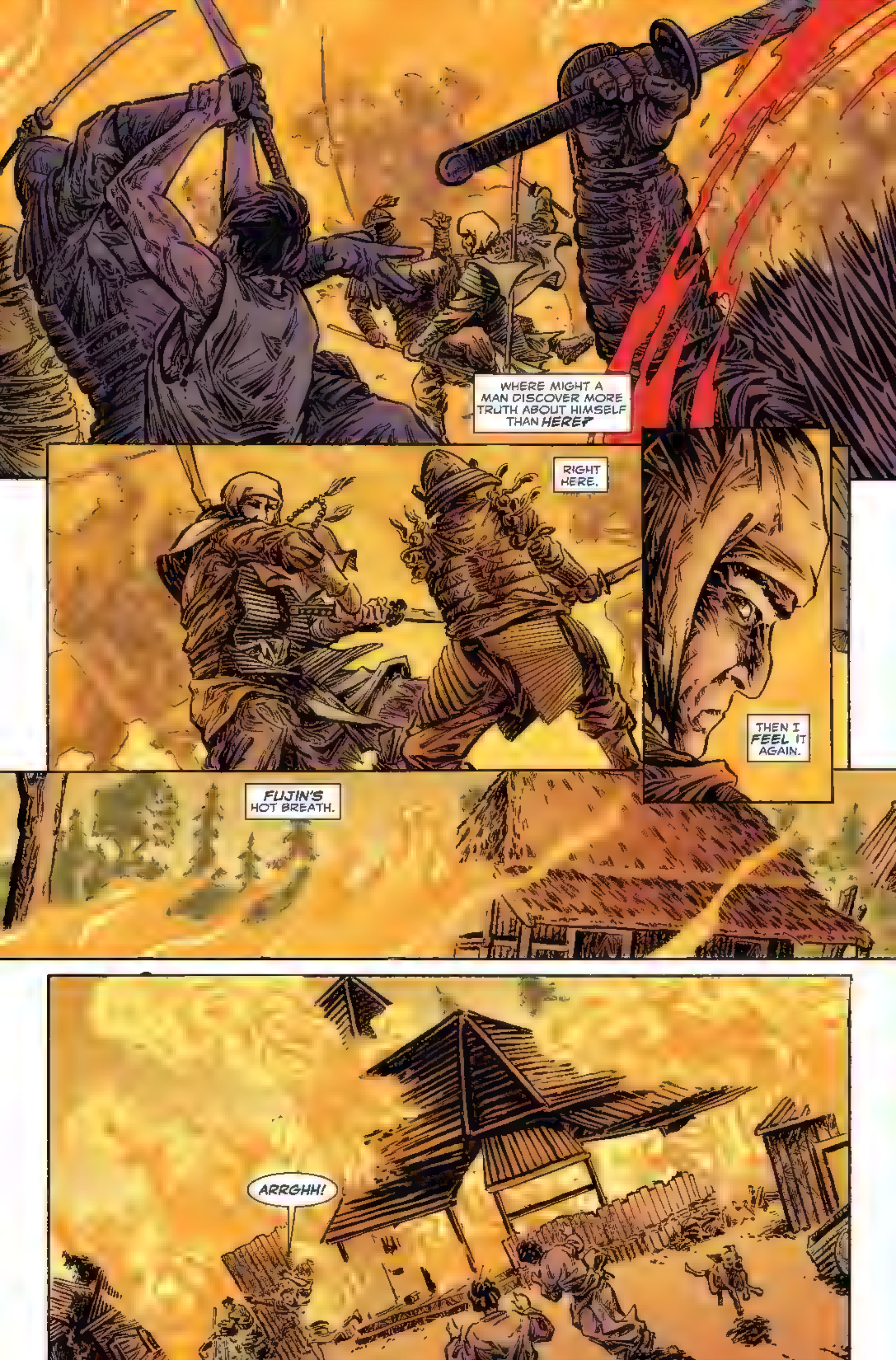

--ALL RIGHT, SO MY SAMURAI TURNED OUT TO BE A *JOKE*. WHAT HAVE YOU *OLD MEN* DONE?
I'VE BEEN THINKING. PERHAPS WE SHOULD *BARTER* WITH THE BANDITS.
WE HAVE MANY YOUNG MAIDENS IN THIS VILLAGE. WE COULD SPARE A FEW. THE BANDITS MIGHT GET A DECENT PRICE FOR THEM IN *EDO*.
MY UNCLE HAS LOST THE POWER TO ENJOY A WOMAN, SO CONSIDERS THEM *EXPENDABLE*.
CLANGG CLANGG CLANGG
CLANGG CLANGG
MY GOD.
PERHAPS OUR PRAYERS HAVE BEEN ANSWERED AFTER ALL.

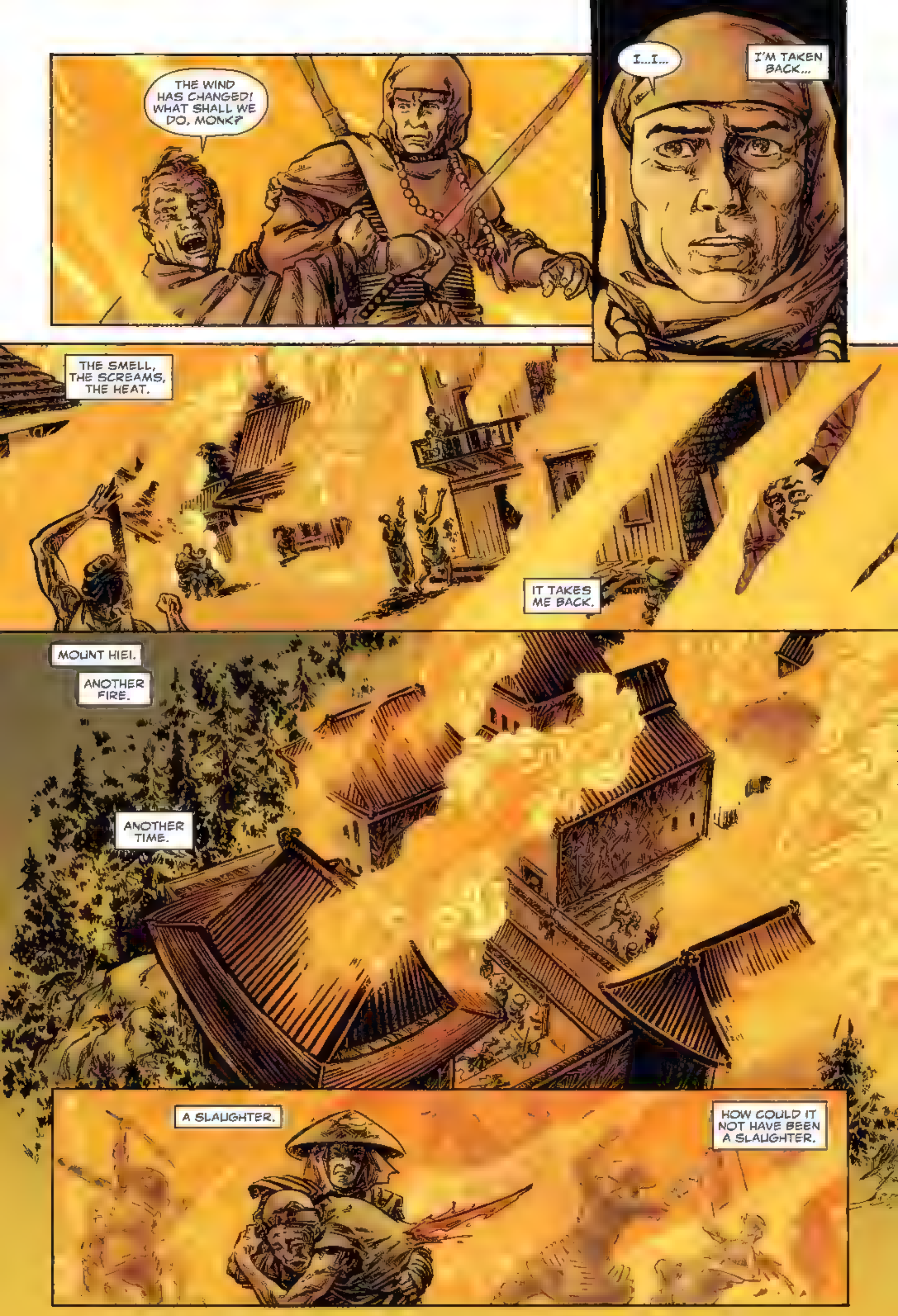

I WANT EVERY ABLE MAN AND WOMAN IN THE VILLAGE AT MY DISPOSAL.
YOU WERE WRONG ABOUT THE MONK, HIDEO. HE *DOES* CARE ABOUT US.
HE CARES FOR NOTHING BUT HIMSELF. HE TOLD MY UNCLE AND ME THAT HE WOULDN'T BE DRAWN BACK INTO THE WAYS OF THE WORLD.
WELL, ***SOMETHING*** BROUGHT HIM DOWN OFF HIS MOUNTAIN.

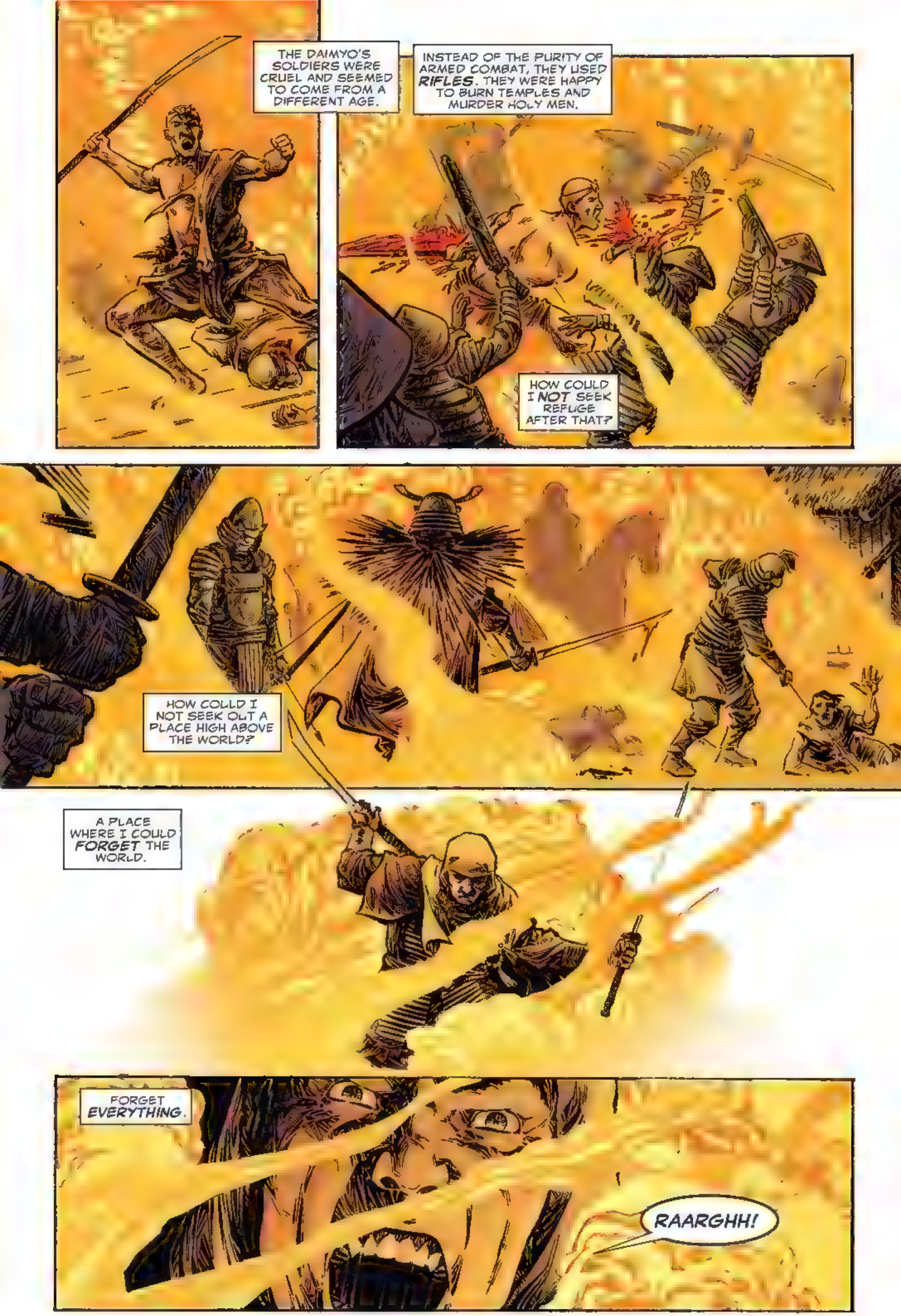

DAYS PASS.
THE WORK IS BACKBREAKING. BUT FEELS GOOD.
PERHAPS *TOO* GOOD.
TO BE BACK IN THE WORLD.
THE COMPANY OF OTHERS. THE SOUND OF VOICES THAT ARE NOT MY OWN.
AND OTHER, MORE BEGUILING PLEASURES
WATER, MASTER?
THANK YOU, GIRL.
MASTER, WHY DID YOU DECIDE TO HELP US?
I AM A MONK, CHILD. I SEEK THE TRUTH.
COME, SHINO OTHERS NEED WATER TOO.

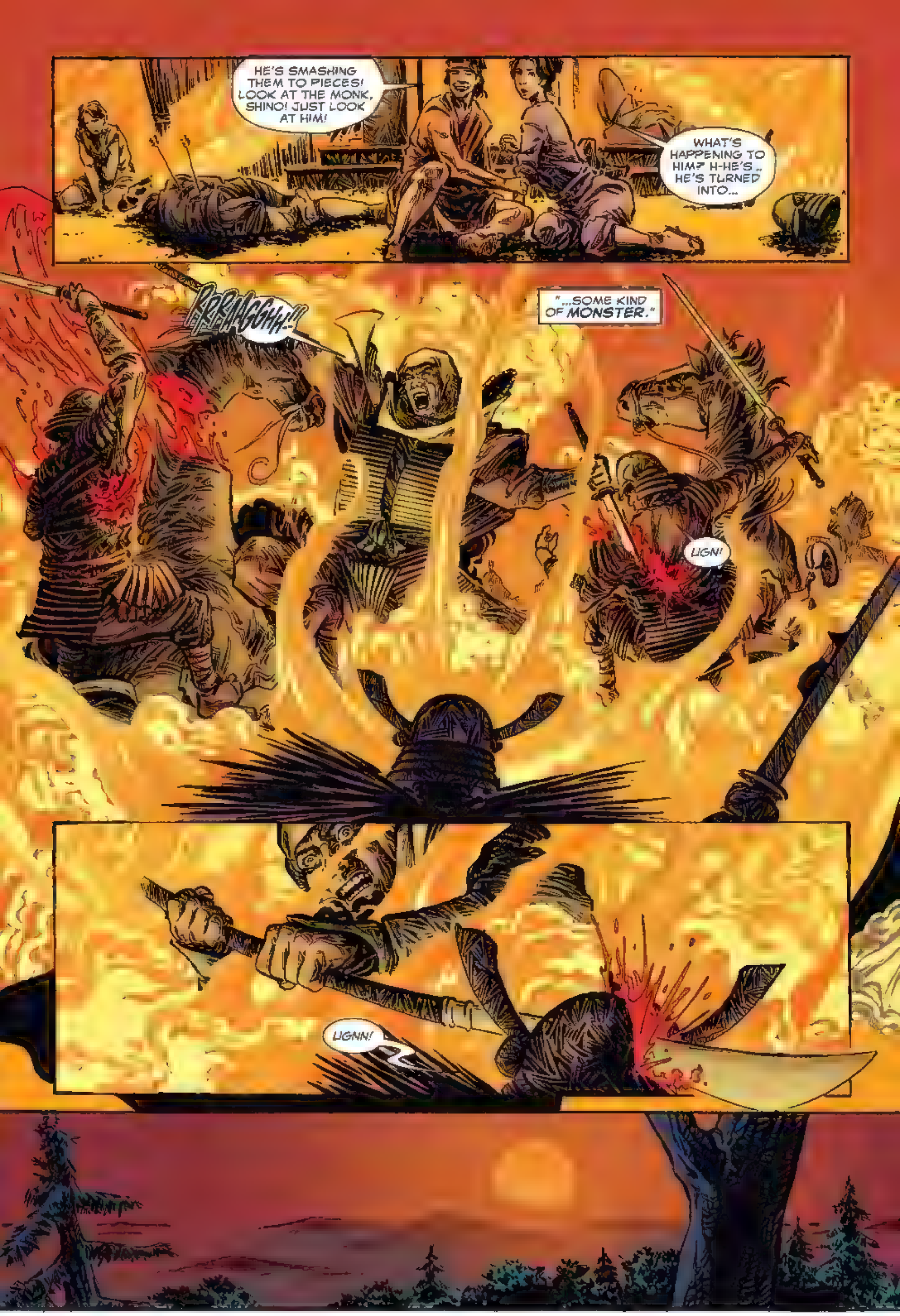

DONGG DONGG DONGG
THE WIND IS BECALMED WHEN THEY COME.
LIKE THE HOT BREATH OF *FUJIN* BEFORE A STORM.
IN TRUTH, WE'RE NOT QUITE READY FOR THEM.
BUT WHEN ARE WE EVER READY FOR WHAT LIFE BRINGS?

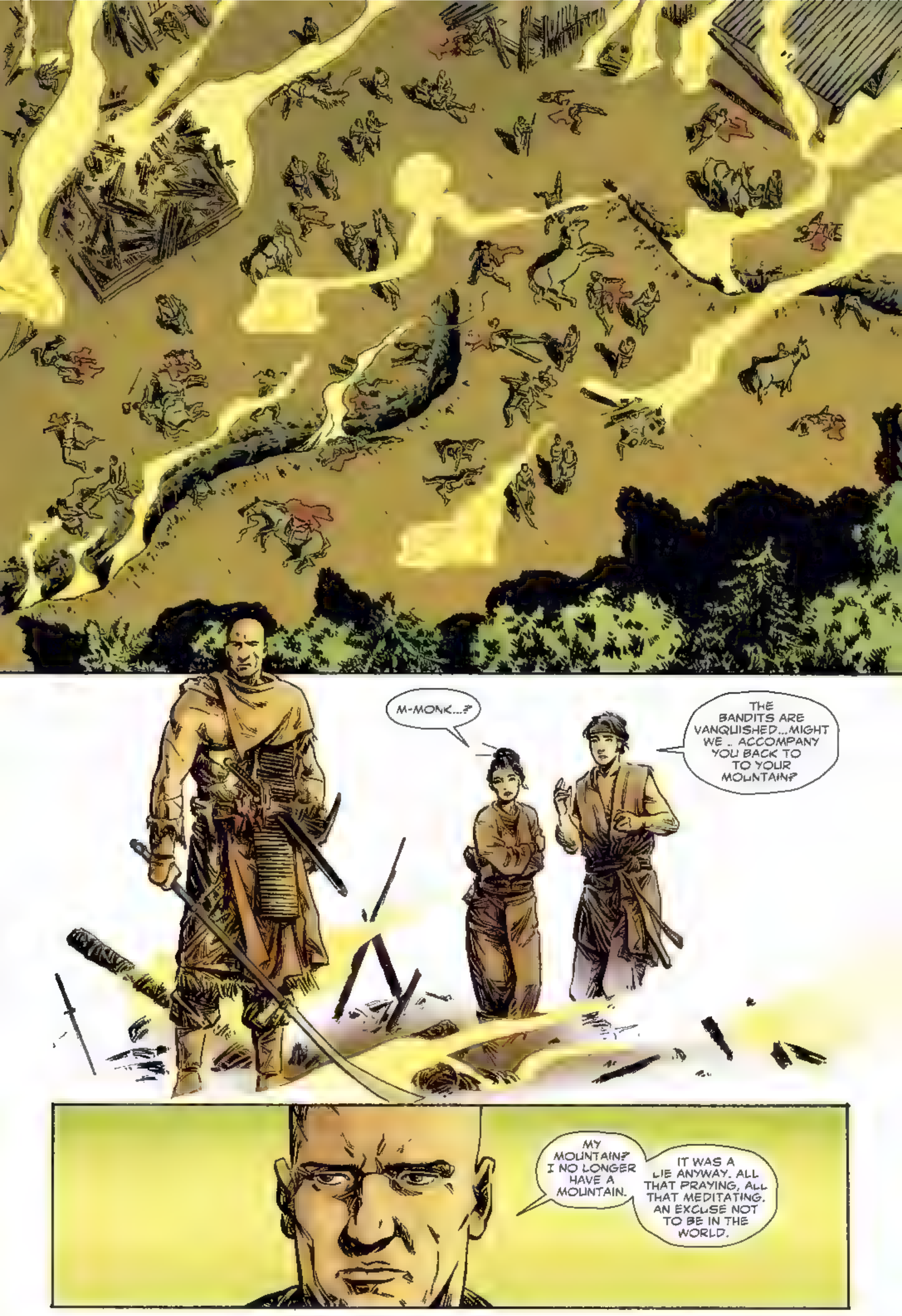

FWOOOOSH
I HAVE HAD HOURS ON MY MOUNTAIN TO DWELL ON HOW A FEW DEFENDERS MIGHT REPULSE A LARGER, STRONGER ENEMY.
AH, MY MOUNTAIN.
I TOLD MYSELF I SOUGHT THE *TRUTH* THERE.
BUT WHAT IS MORE TRUE THAN *THIS?*

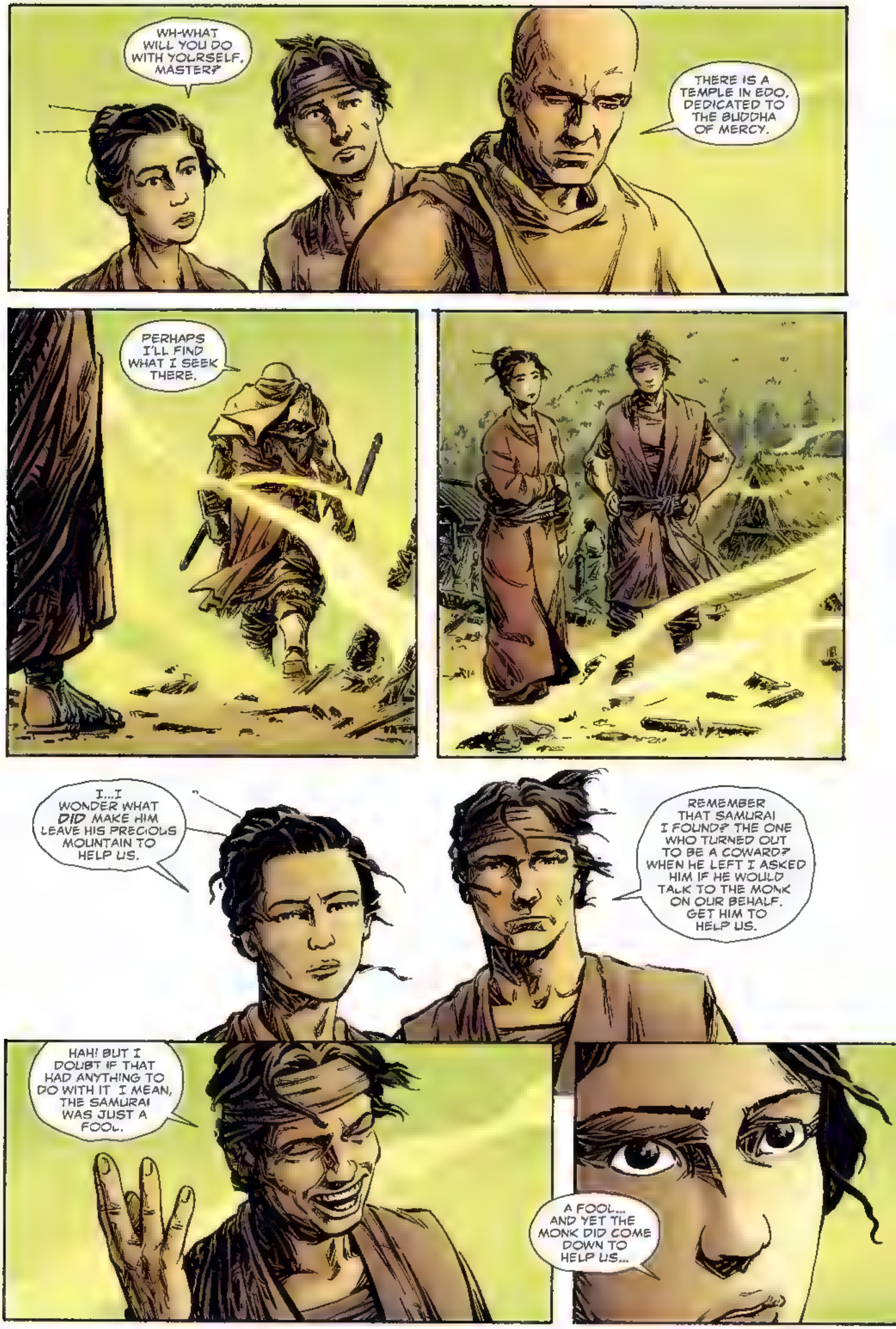

WHERE MIGHT A MAN DISCOVER MORE TRUTH ABOUT HIMSELF THAN *HERE?*
RIGHT HERE.
THEN I *FEEL* IT AGAIN.
FUJIN'S HOT BREATH.
ARRGHH!

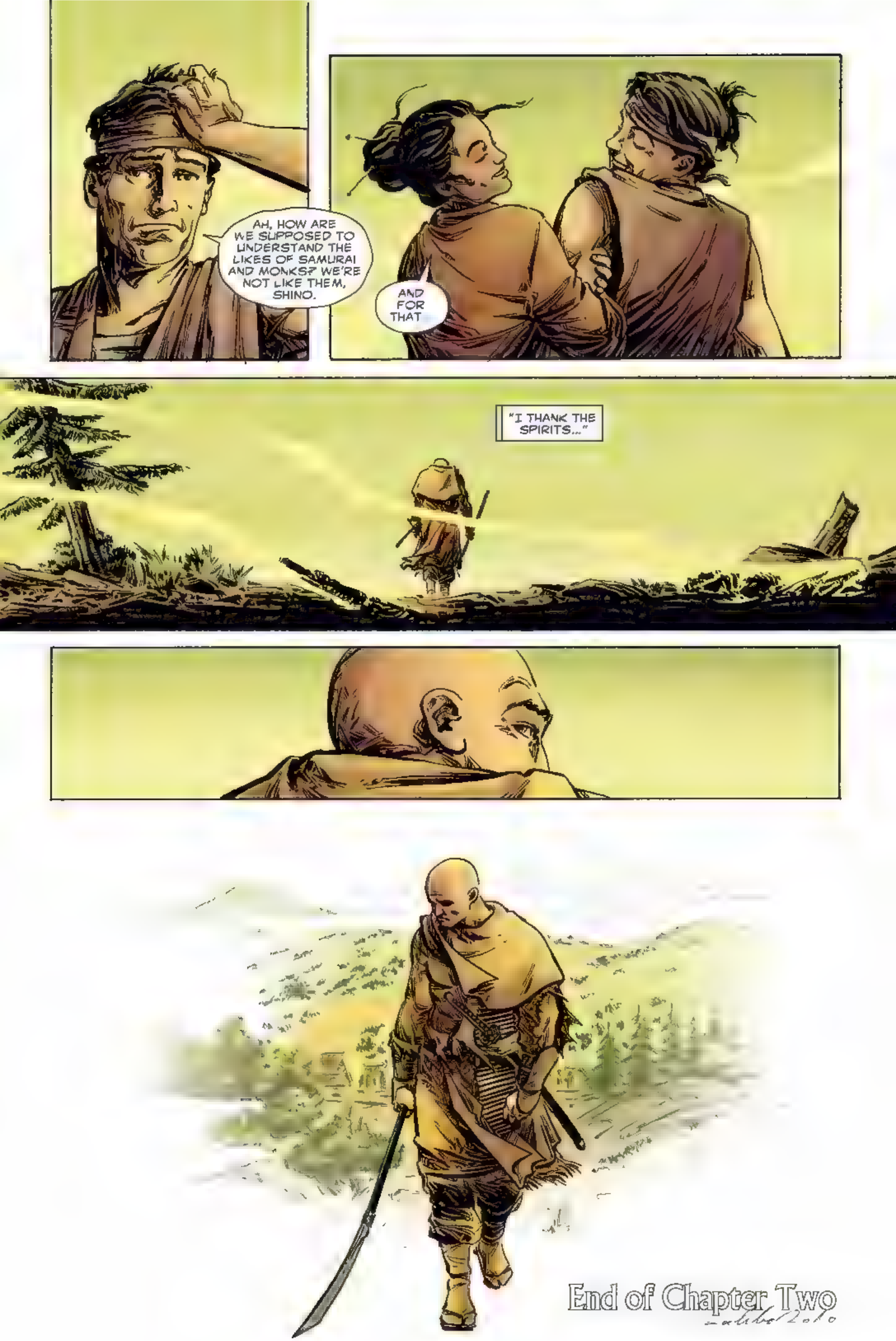

THE WIND HAS CHANGED! WHAT SHALL WE DO, MONK?
I...I...
I'M TAKEN BACK...
THE SMELL, THE SCREAMS, THE HEAT.
IT TAKES ME BACK.
MOUNT HIEI.
ANOTHER FIRE.
ANOTHER TIME.
A SLAUGHTER.
HOW COULD IT NOT HAVE BEEN A SLAUGHTER.


THE DAIMYO'S SOLDIERS WERE CRUEL AND SEEMED TO COME FROM A DIFFERENT AGE.
INSTEAD OF THE PURITY OF ARMED COMBAT, THEY USED *RIFLES*. THEY WERE HAPPY TO BURN TEMPLES AND MURDER HOLY MEN.
HOW COULD I *NOT* SEEK REFUGE AFTER THAT?
HOW COULD I NOT SEEK OUT A PLACE HIGH ABOVE THE WORLD?
A PLACE WHERE I COULD *FORGET* THE WORLD.
FORGET *EVERYTHING*.
RAARGHH!


HE'S SMASHING THEM TO PIECES! LOOK AT THE MONK, SHINO! JUST LOOK AT HIM!
WHAT'S HAPPENING TO HIM? H-HE'S... HE'S TURNED INTO...
RRRAAGGHH!!
"...SOME KIND OF **MONSTER**."
UGN!
UGNN!


M-MONK...?
THE BANDITS ARE VANQUISHED...MIGHT WE .. ACCOMPANY YOU BACK TO TO YOUR MOUNTAIN?
MY MOUNTAIN? I NO LONGER HAVE A MOUNTAIN.
IT WAS A LIE ANYWAY. ALL THAT PRAYING, ALL THAT MEDITATING. AN EXCUSE NOT TO BE IN THE WORLD.


WH-WHAT WILL YOU DO WITH YOURSELF, MASTER?
THERE IS A TEMPLE IN EDO, DEDICATED TO THE BUDDHA OF MERCY.
PERHAPS I'LL FIND WHAT I SEEK THERE.
I...I WONDER WHAT *DID* MAKE HIM LEAVE HIS PRECIOUS MOUNTAIN TO HELP US.
REMEMBER THAT SAMURAI I FOUND? THE ONE WHO TURNED OUT TO BE A COWARD? WHEN HE LEFT I ASKED HIM IF HE WOULD TALK TO THE MONK ON OUR BEHALF. GET HIM TO HELP US.
HAH! BUT I DOUBT IF THAT HAD ANYTHING TO DO WITH IT. I MEAN, THE SAMURAI WAS JUST A FOOL.
A FOOL... AND YET THE MONK DID COME DOWN TO HELP US...


AH, HOW ARE WE SUPPOSED TO UNDERSTAND THE LIKES OF SAMURAI AND MONKS? WE'RE NOT LIKE THEM, SHINO.
AND FOR THAT...
"I THANK THE SPIRITS..."
End of Chapter Two

5 RONIN

浪人

Chapter Two:
The Way Of The Monk

Writer:
Peter
Milligan

Art:
Dalibor
Talajić

Color Art:
Lee
Loughridge

Letters:
VC's Joe
Caramagna

Cover:
David Aja

Variant
Cover:
Mark
Brooks

Editor:
Sebastian Girner

Editor in Chief:
Axel Alonso

Chief Creative
Officer:
Joe Quesada

Publisher:
Dan Buckley

Exec. Producer:
Alan Fine

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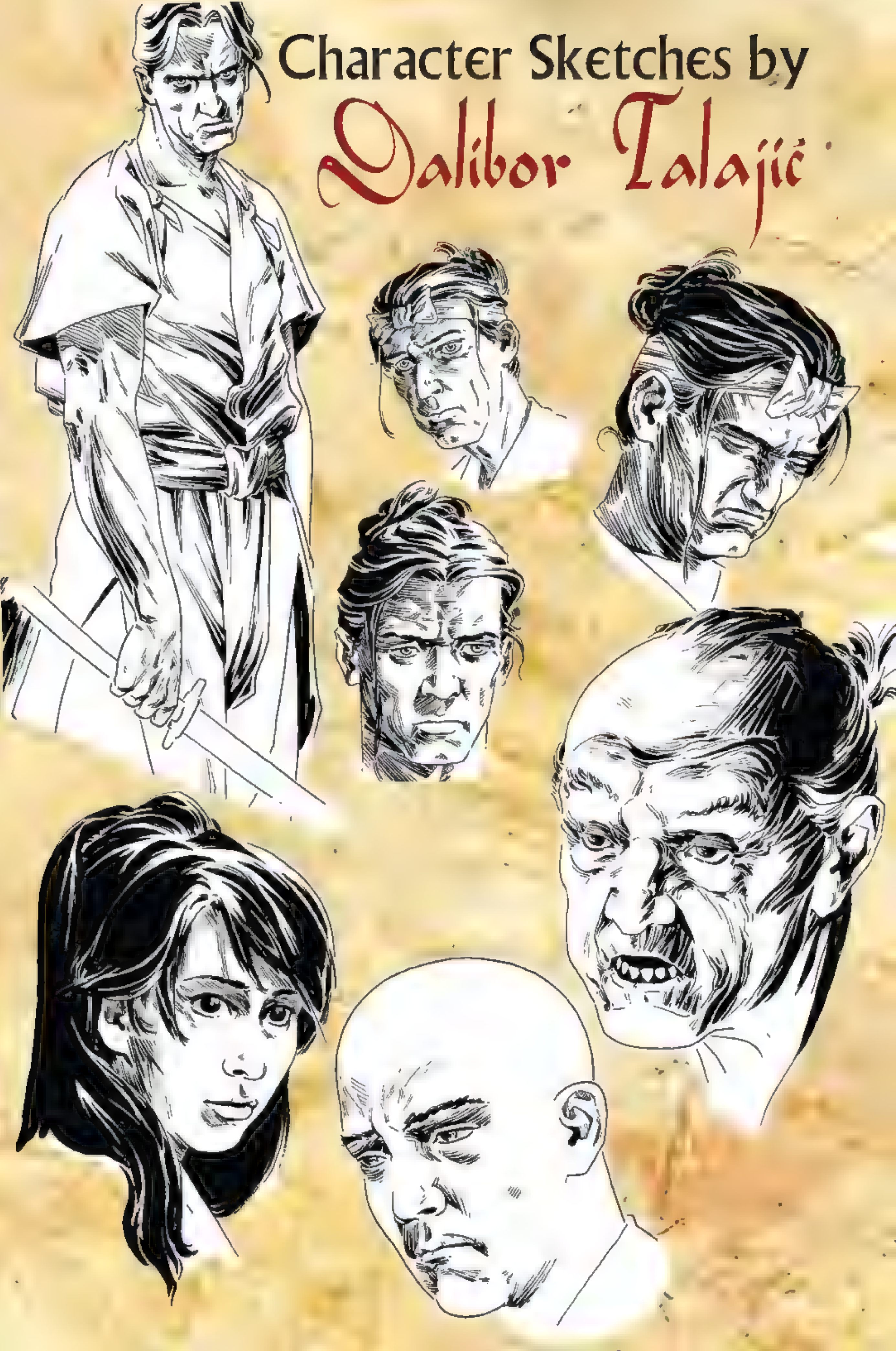

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MILLIGAN
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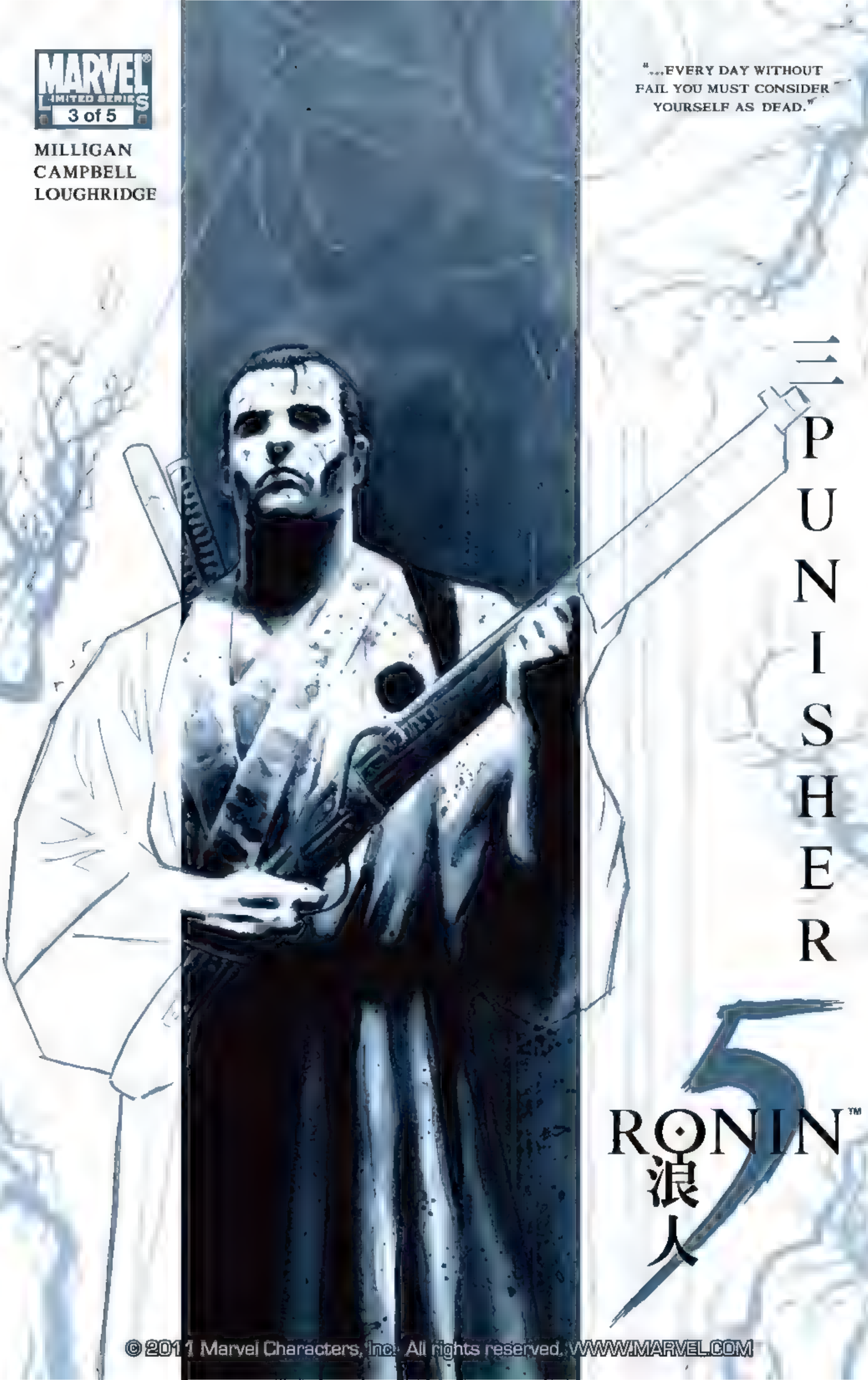
LOUGHRIDGE

"...EVERY DAY WITHOUT FAIL YOU MUST CONSIDER YOURSELF AS DEAD."



三 PUNISHER

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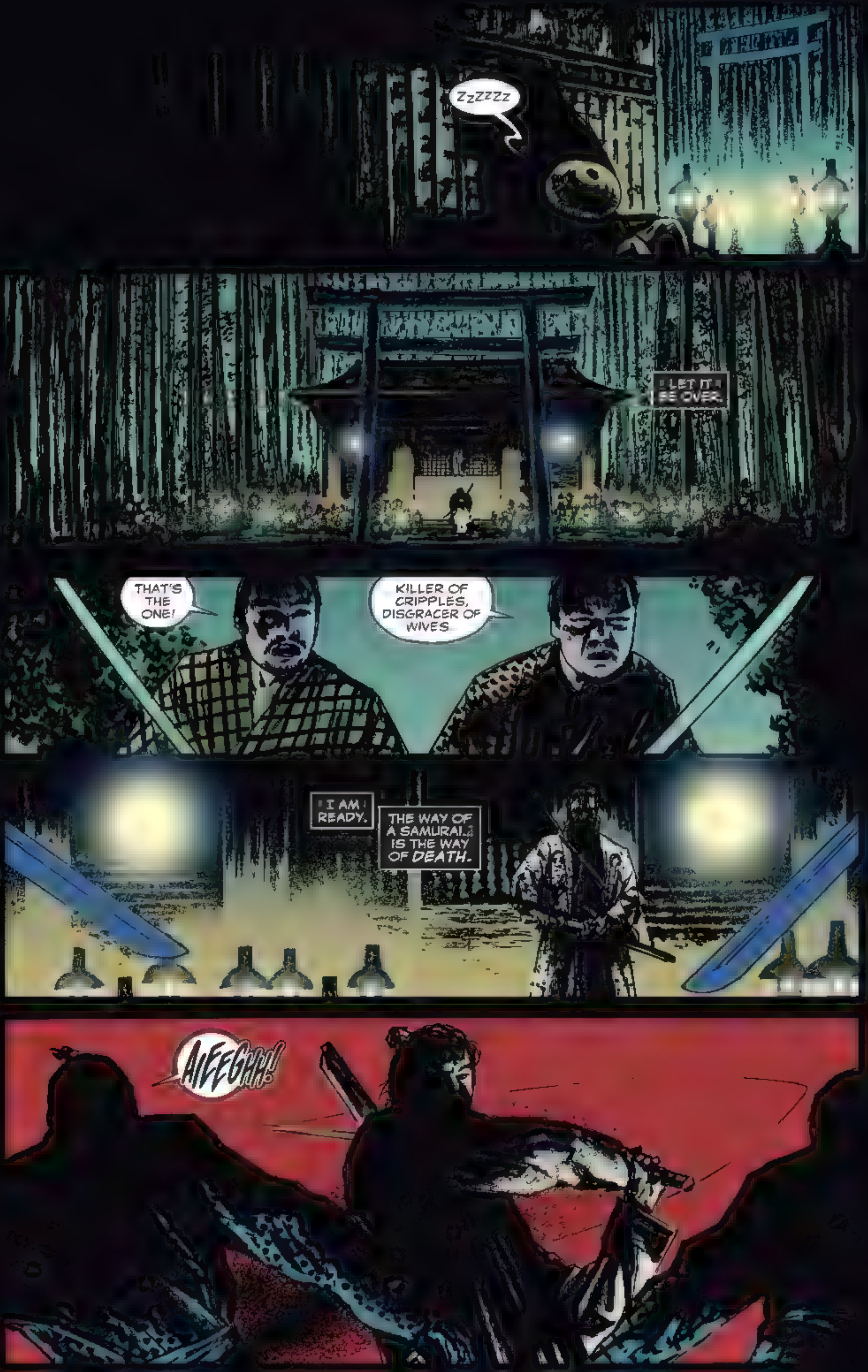
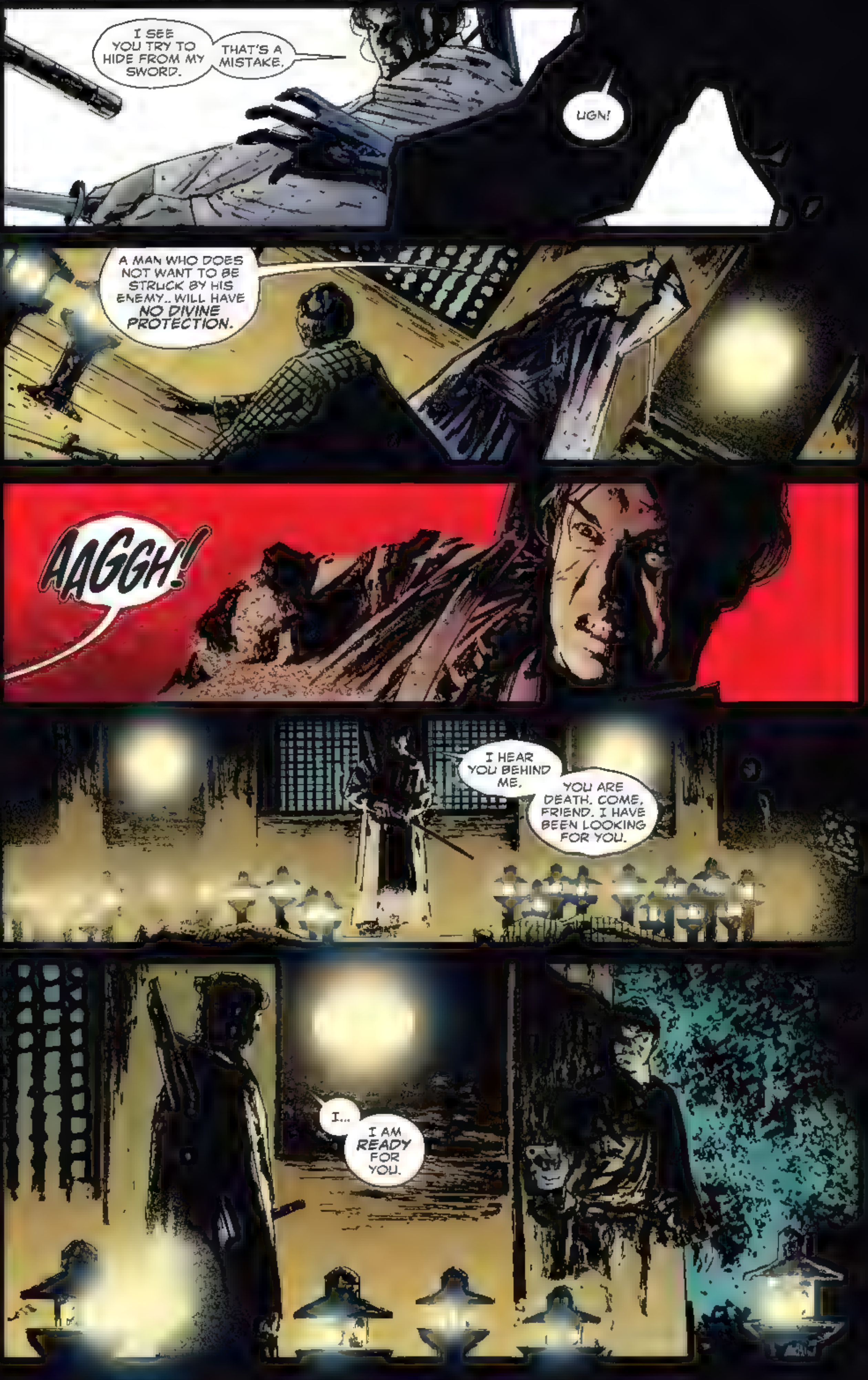
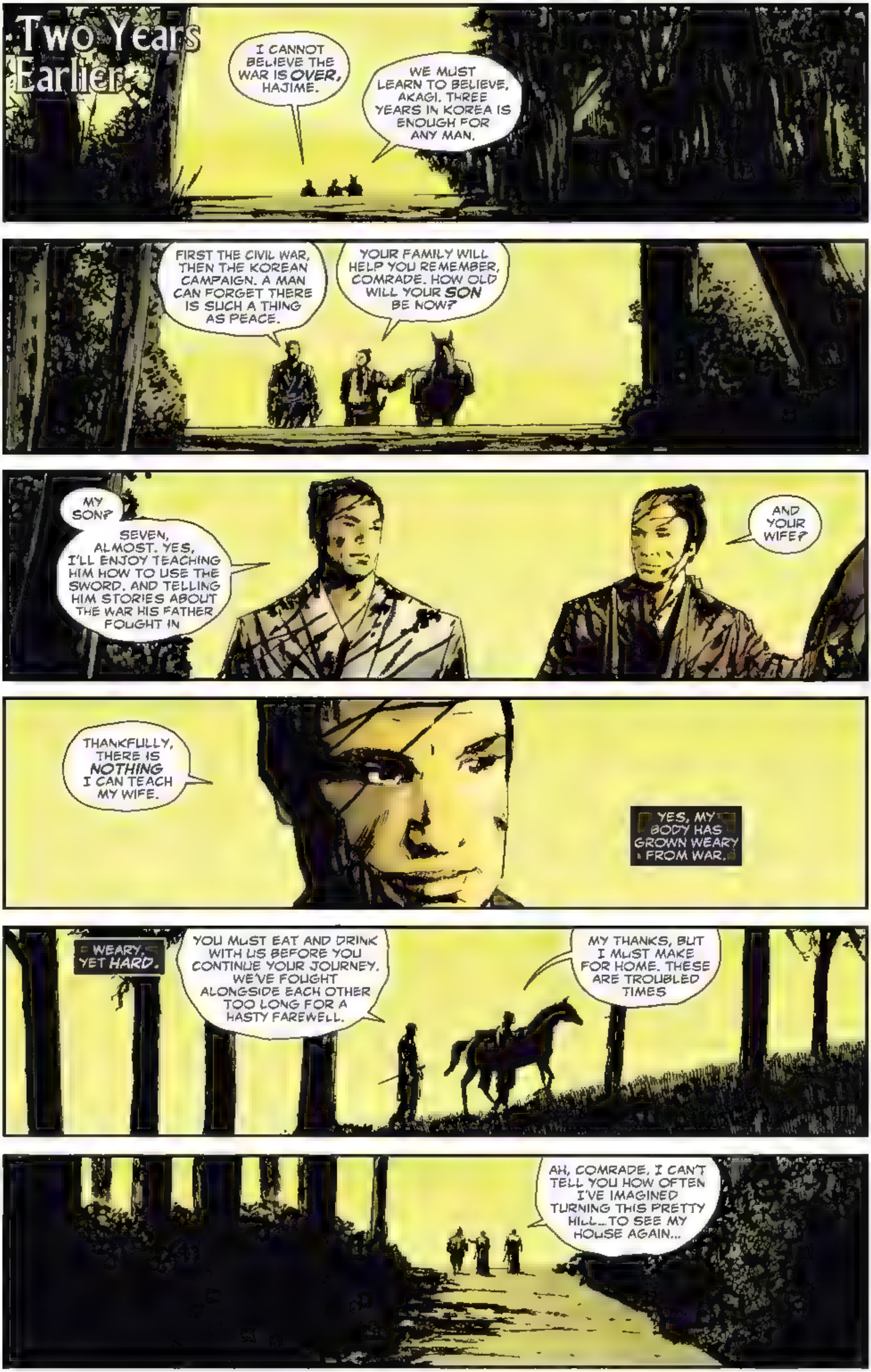
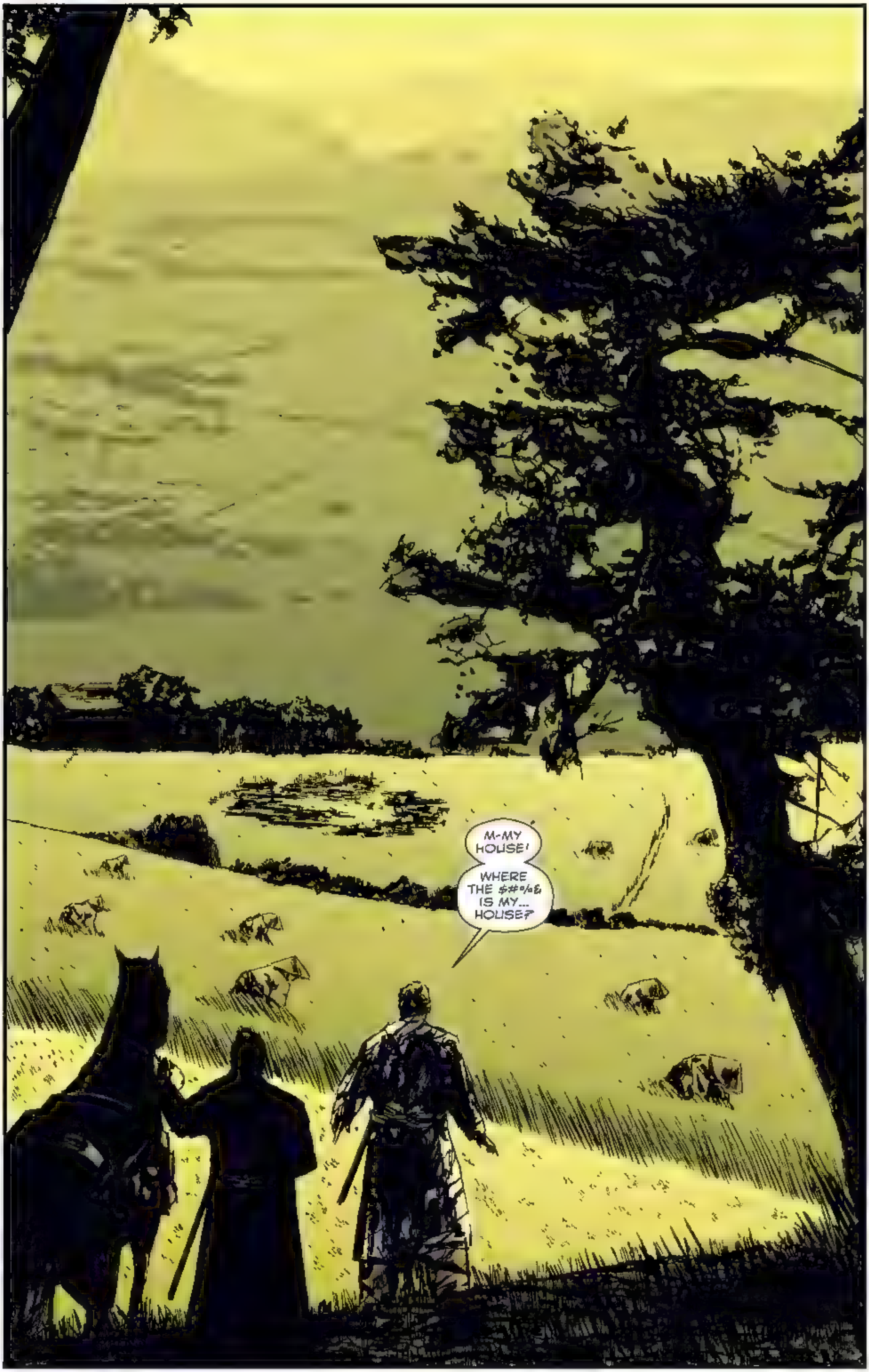
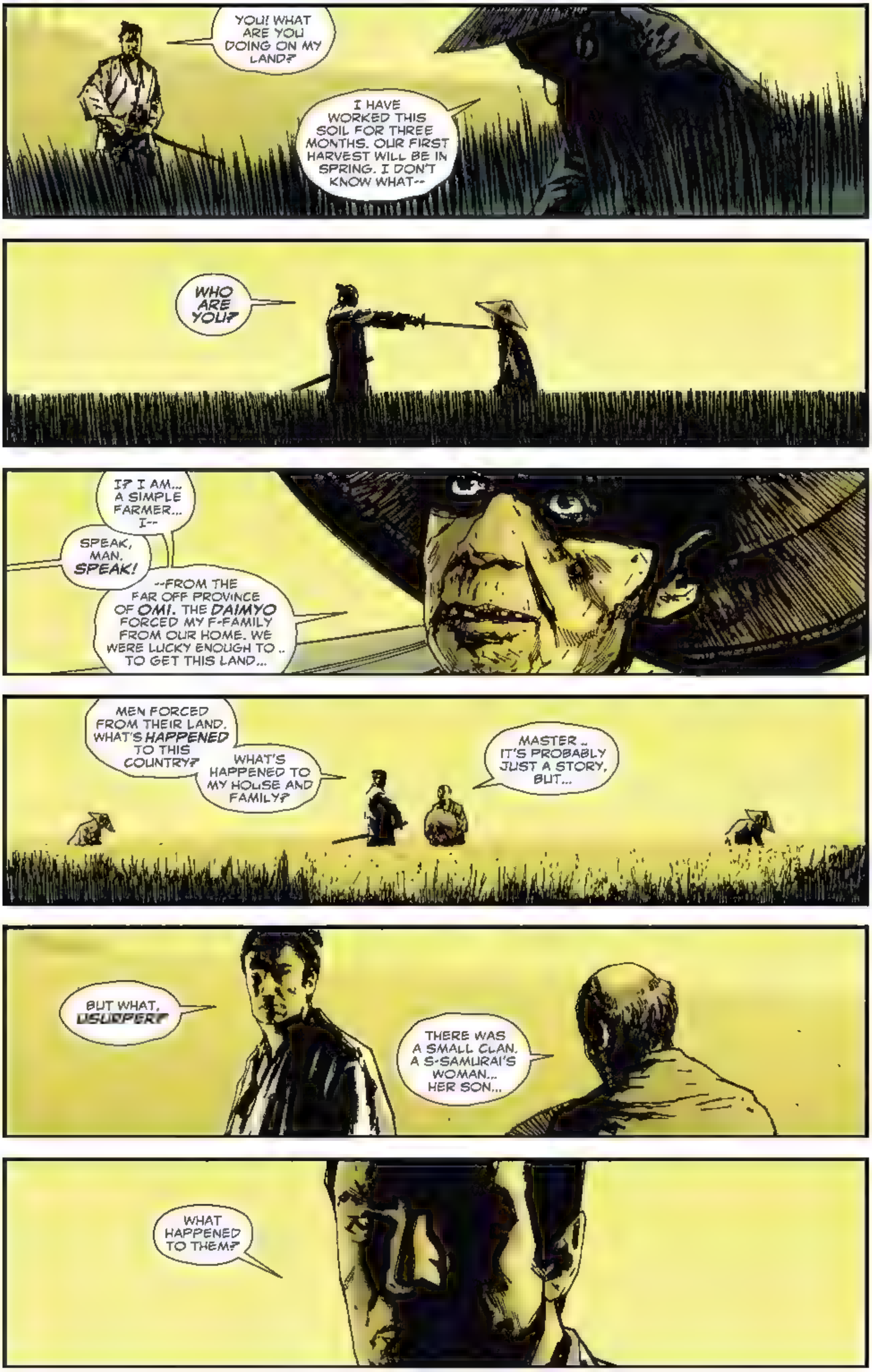
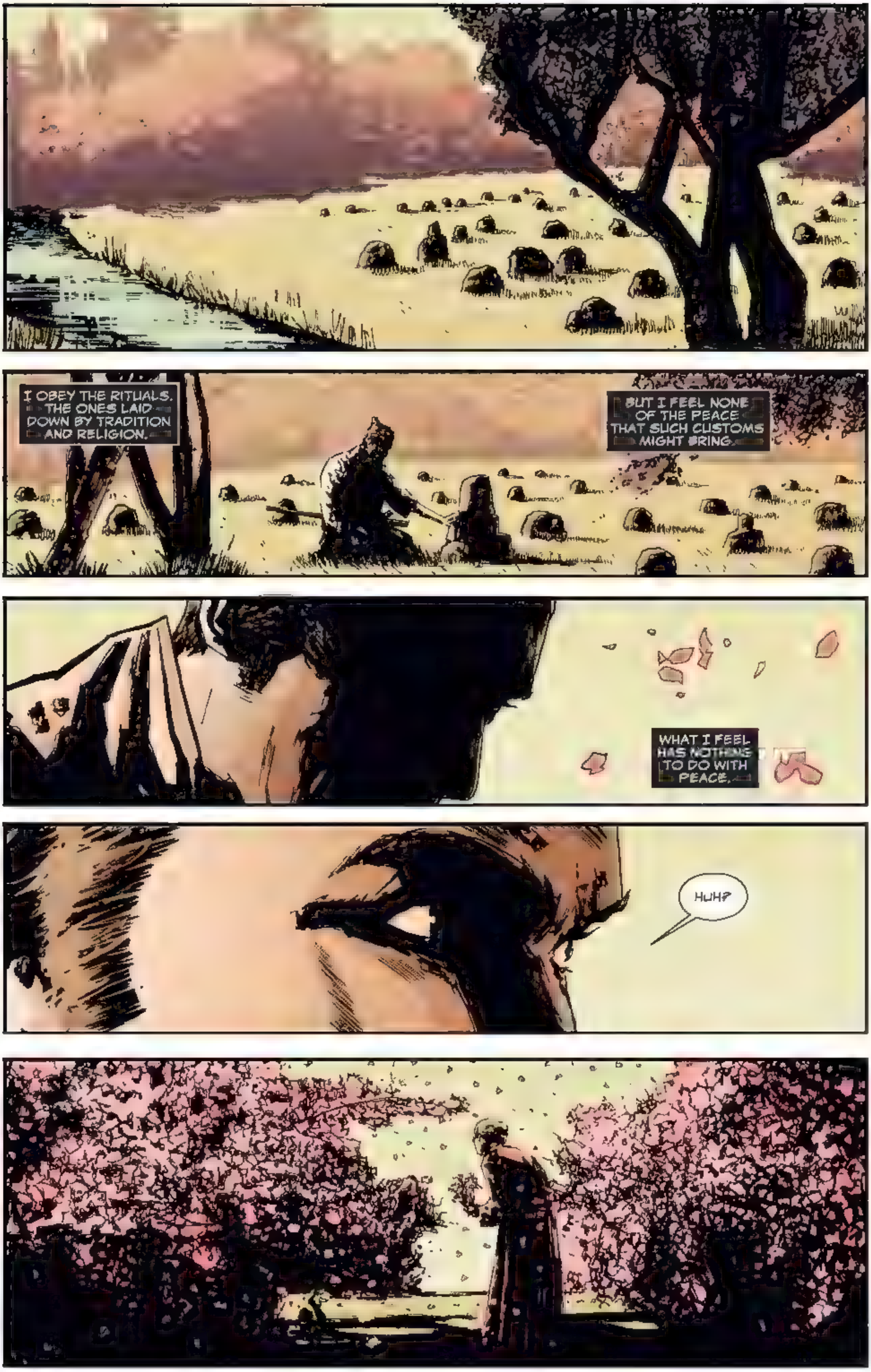

ZzZZZz
LET IT BE OVER.
THAT'S THE ONE!
KILLER OF CRIPPLES, DISGRACER OF WIVES
I AM READY.
THE WAY OF A SAMURAI... IS THE WAY OF DEATH.
AIEEGHH!

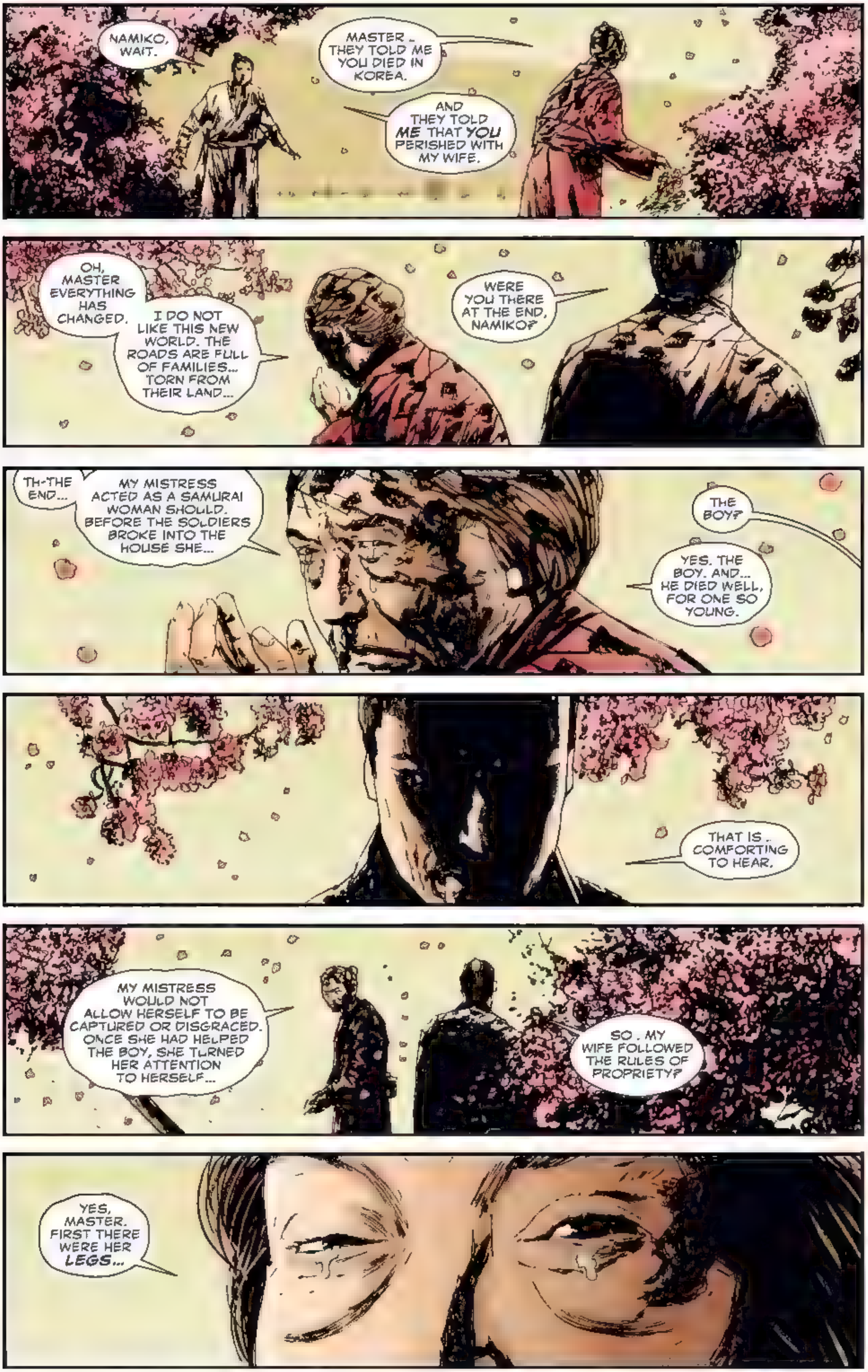

I SEE YOU TRY TO HIDE FROM MY SWORD.
THAT'S A MISTAKE.
UGN!
A MAN WHO DOES NOT WANT TO BE STRUCK BY HIS ENEMY.. WILL HAVE *NO DIVINE PROTECTION.*
AAGGH!
I HEAR YOU BEHIND ME.
YOU ARE DEATH. COME, FRIEND. I HAVE BEEN LOOKING FOR YOU.
I...
I AM *READY* FOR YOU.

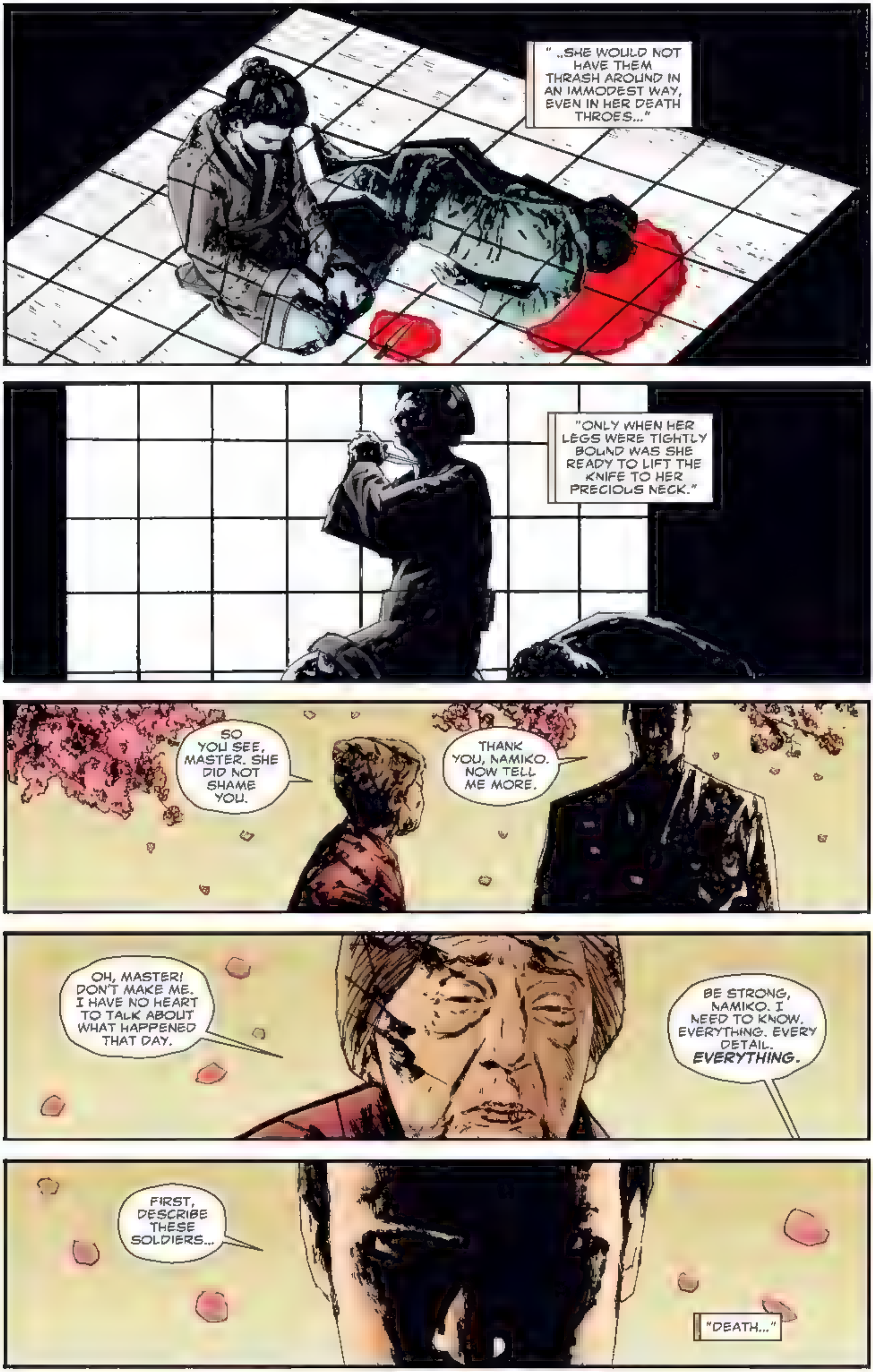

Two Years Earlier
I CANNOT BELIEVE THE WAR IS *OVER*, HAJIME.
WE MUST LEARN TO BELIEVE, AKAGI. THREE YEARS IN KOREA IS ENOUGH FOR ANY MAN.
FIRST THE CIVIL WAR, THEN THE KOREAN CAMPAIGN. A MAN CAN FORGET THERE IS SUCH A THING AS PEACE.
YOUR FAMILY WILL HELP YOU REMEMBER, COMRADE. HOW OLD WILL YOUR *SON* BE NOW?
MY SON?
SEVEN, ALMOST. YES, I'LL ENJOY TEACHING HIM HOW TO USE THE SWORD. AND TELLING HIM STORIES ABOUT THE WAR HIS FATHER FOUGHT IN
AND YOUR WIFE?
THANKFULLY, THERE IS *NOTHING* I CAN TEACH MY WIFE.
YES, MY BODY HAS GROWN WEARY FROM WAR.
WEARY, YET *HARD*.
YOU MUST EAT AND DRINK WITH US BEFORE YOU CONTINUE YOUR JOURNEY. WE'VE FOUGHT ALONGSIDE EACH OTHER TOO LONG FOR A HASTY FAREWELL.
MY THANKS, BUT I MUST MAKE FOR HOME. THESE ARE TROUBLED TIMES.
AH, COMRADE. I CAN'T TELL YOU HOW OFTEN I'VE IMAGINED TURNING THIS PRETTY HILL...TO SEE MY HOUSE AGAIN...

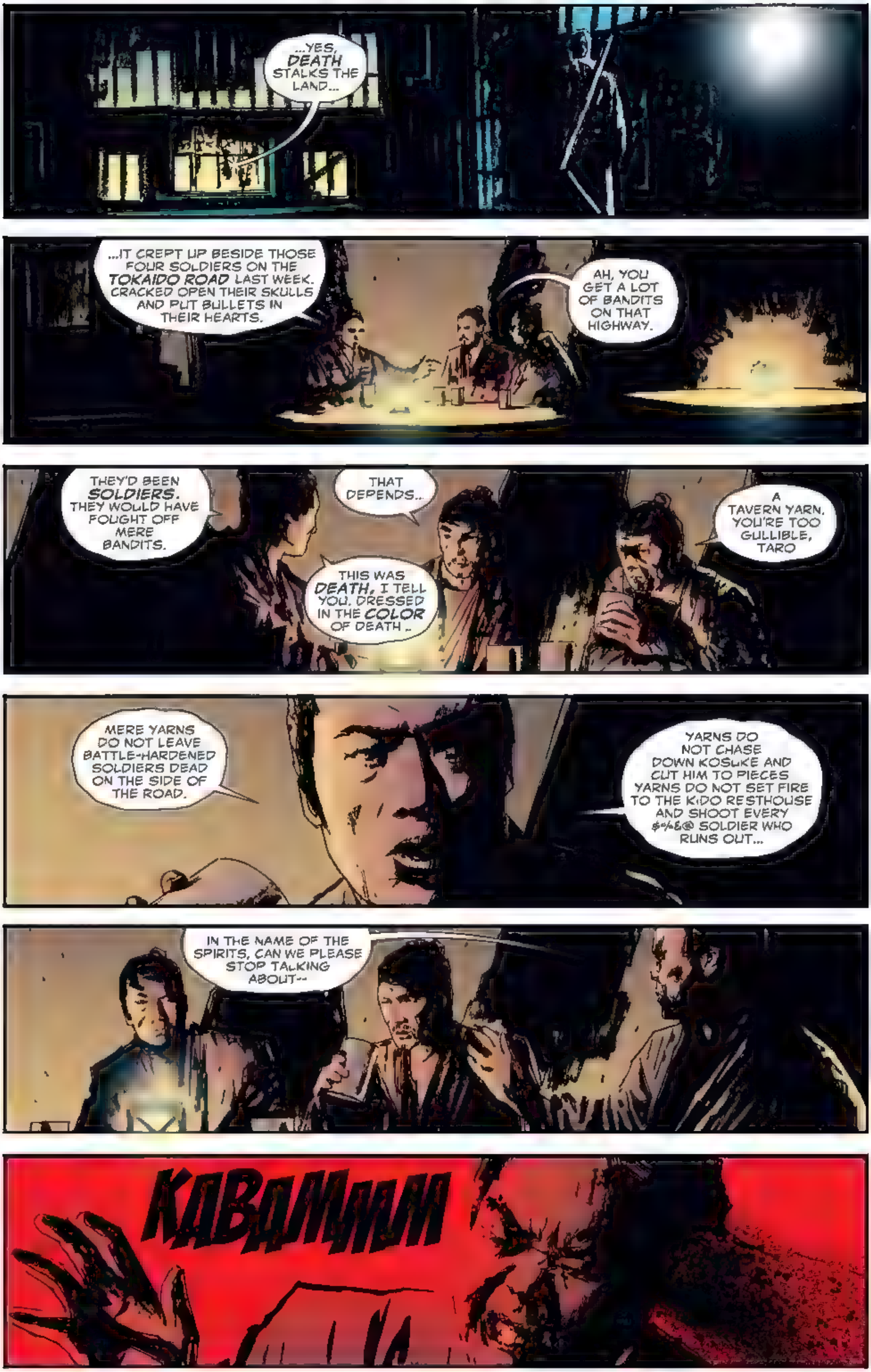

M-MY HOUSE!
WHERE THE $#%& IS MY... HOUSE?

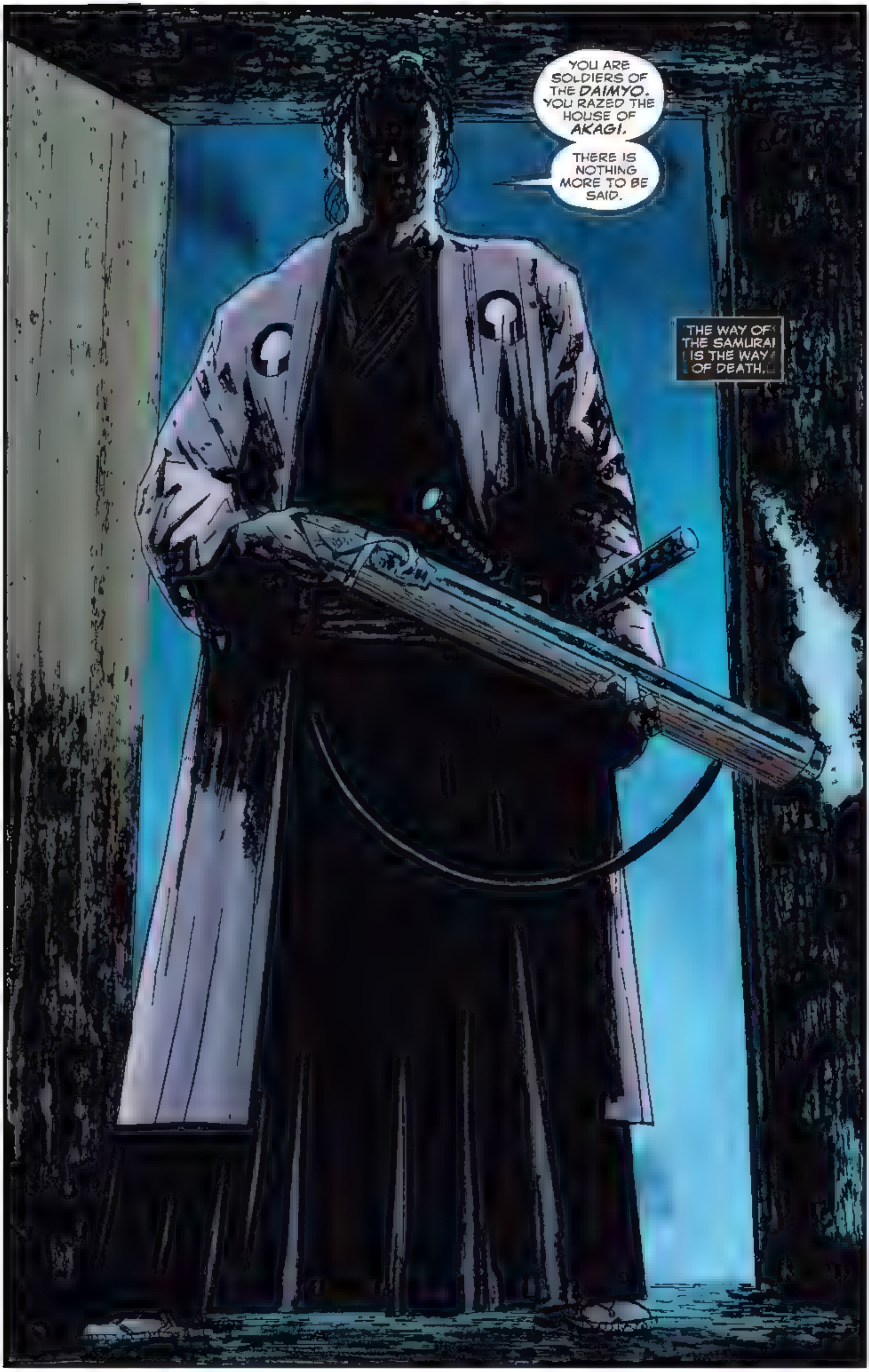

YOU! WHAT ARE YOU DOING ON MY LAND?
I HAVE WORKED THIS SOIL FOR THREE MONTHS. OUR FIRST HARVEST WILL BE IN SPRING. I DON'T KNOW WHAT--
WHO ARE YOU?
I? I AM... A SIMPLE FARMER... I--
SPEAK, MAN. SPEAK!
--FROM THE FAR OFF PROVINCE OF OMI. THE DAIMYO FORCED MY F-FAMILY FROM OUR HOME. WE WERE LUCKY ENOUGH TO .. TO GET THIS LAND...
MEN FORCED FROM THEIR LAND. WHAT'S HAPPENED TO THIS COUNTRY?
WHAT'S HAPPENED TO MY HOUSE AND FAMILY?
MASTER .. IT'S PROBABLY JUST A STORY, BUT...
BUT WHAT, USURPER?
THERE WAS A SMALL CLAN. A S-SAMURAI'S WOMAN... HER SON...
WHAT HAPPENED TO THEM?

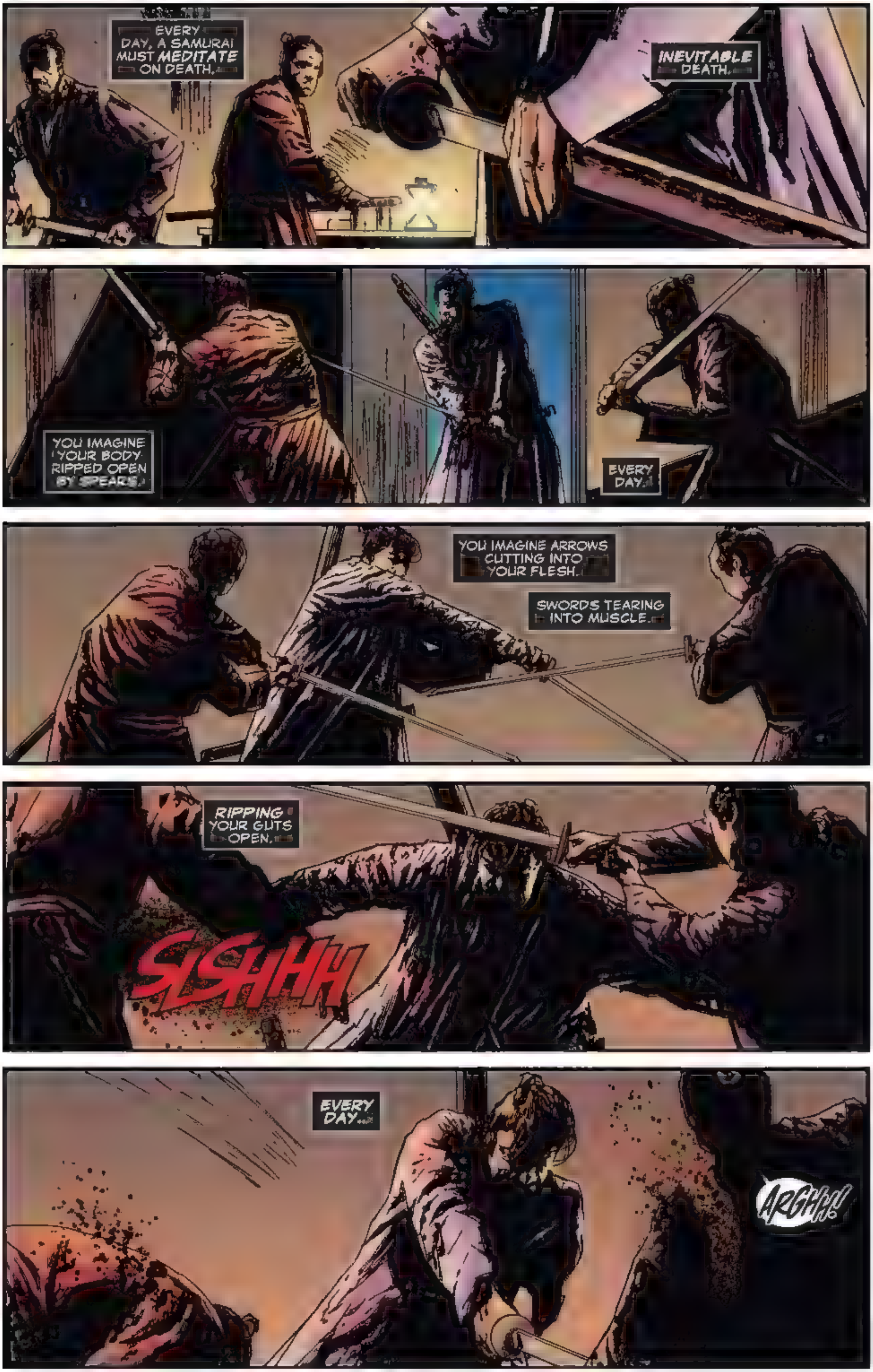

I OBEY THE RITUALS. THE ONES LAID DOWN BY TRADITION AND RELIGION.
BUT I FEEL NONE OF THE PEACE THAT SUCH CUSTOMS MIGHT BRING.
WHAT I FEEL HAS NOTHING TO DO WITH PEACE.
HUH?

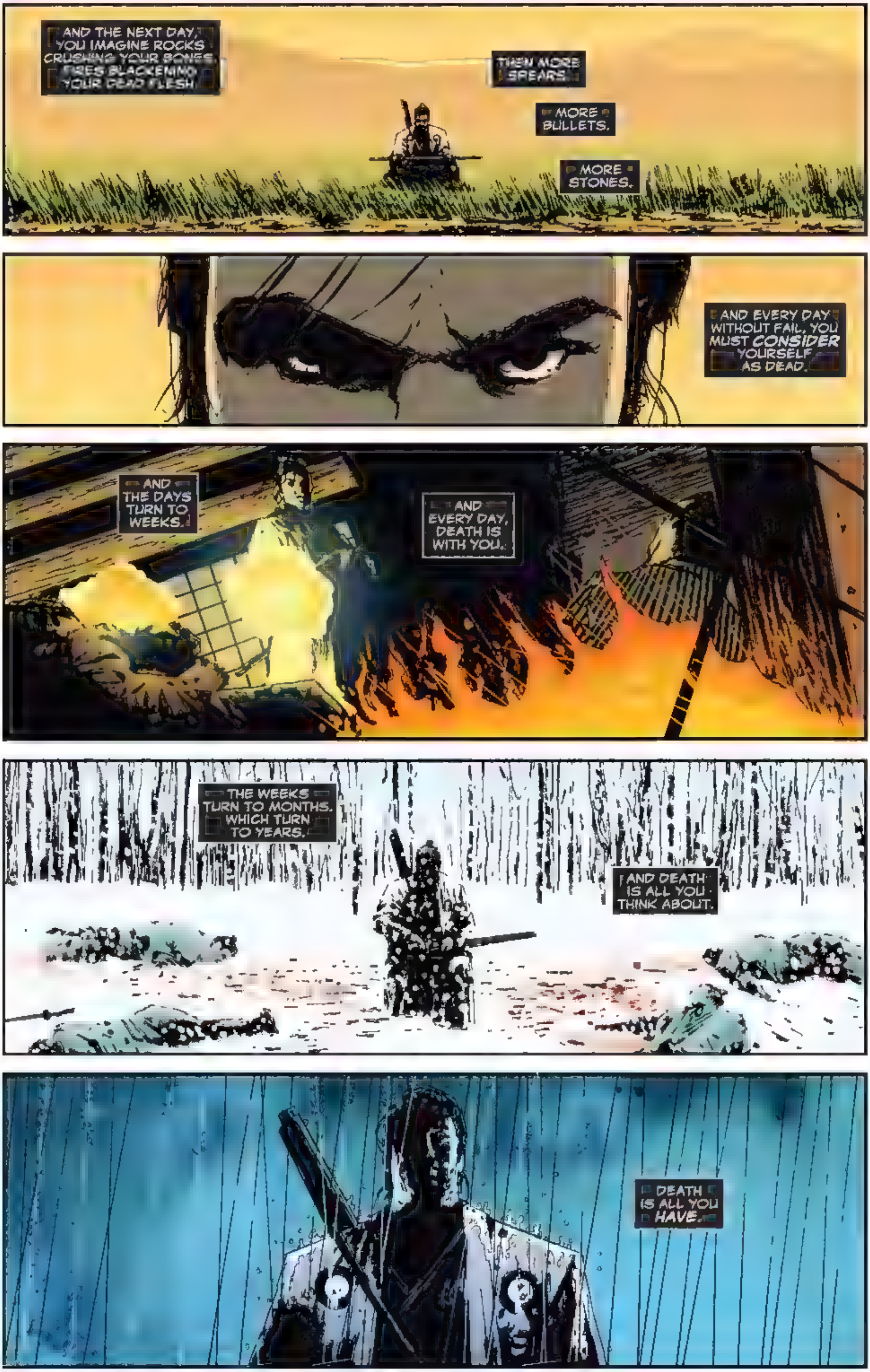

NAMIKO, WAIT.
MASTER... THEY TOLD ME YOU DIED IN KOREA.
AND THEY TOLD ***ME*** THAT ***YOU*** PERISHED WITH MY WIFE.
OH, MASTER EVERYTHING HAS CHANGED.
I DO NOT LIKE THIS NEW WORLD. THE ROADS ARE FULL OF FAMILIES... TORN FROM THEIR LAND...
WERE YOU THERE AT THE END, NAMIKO?
TH-THE END...
MY MISTRESS ACTED AS A SAMURAI WOMAN SHOULD. BEFORE THE SOLDIERS BROKE INTO THE HOUSE SHE...
THE BOY?
YES. THE BOY. AND... HE DIED WELL, FOR ONE SO YOUNG.
THAT IS... COMFORTING TO HEAR.
MY MISTRESS WOULD NOT ALLOW HERSELF TO BE CAPTURED OR DISGRACED. ONCE SHE HAD HELPED THE BOY, SHE TURNED HER ATTENTION TO HERSELF...
SO... MY WIFE FOLLOWED THE RULES OF PROPRIETY?
YES, MASTER. FIRST THERE WERE HER ***LEGS***...

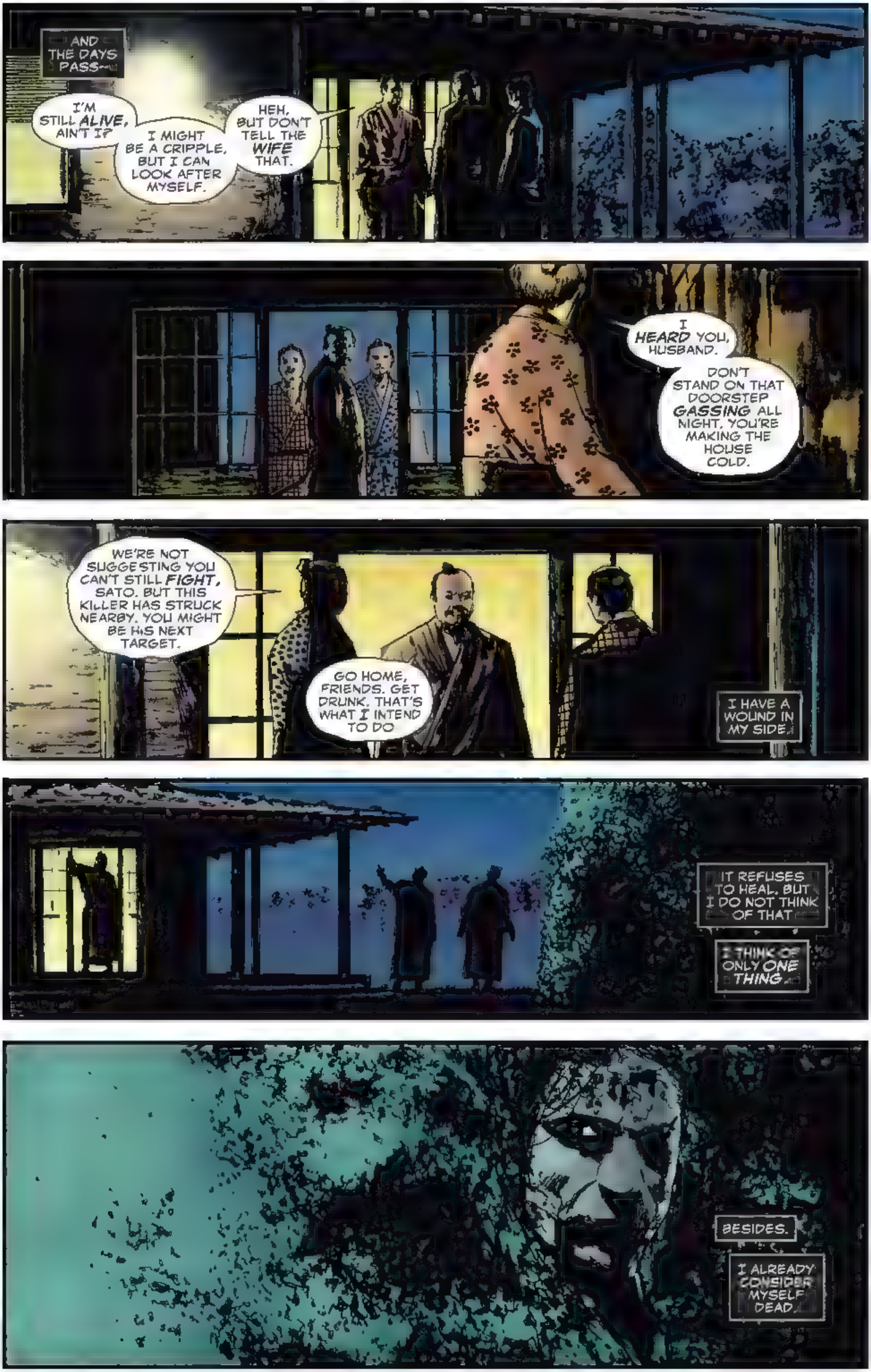

" ..SHE WOULD NOT HAVE THEM THRASH AROUND IN AN IMMODEST WAY, EVEN IN HER DEATH THROES..."
"ONLY WHEN HER LEGS WERE TIGHTLY BOUND WAS SHE READY TO LIFT THE KNIFE TO HER PRECIOUS NECK."
SO YOU SEE, MASTER. SHE DID NOT SHAME YOU.
THANK YOU, NAMIKO. NOW TELL ME MORE.
OH, MASTER! DON'T MAKE ME. I HAVE NO HEART TO TALK ABOUT WHAT HAPPENED THAT DAY.
BE STRONG, NAMIKO. I NEED TO KNOW. EVERYTHING. EVERY DETAIL. *EVERYTHING.*
FIRST, DESCRIBE THESE SOLDIERS...
"DEATH..."

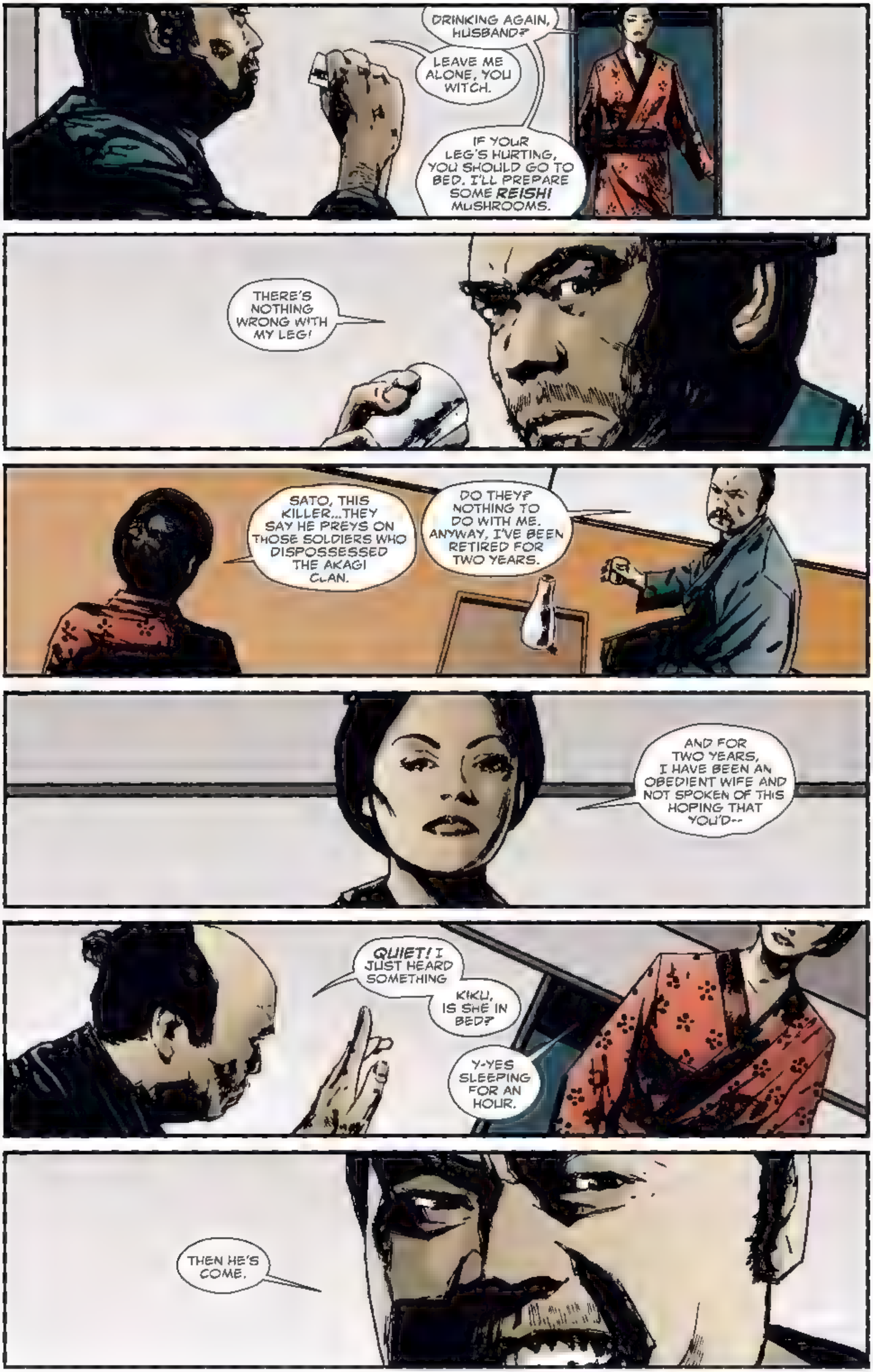

...YES, DEATH STALKS THE LAND...
...IT CREPT UP BESIDE THOSE FOUR SOLDIERS ON THE TOKAIDO ROAD LAST WEEK. CRACKED OPEN THEIR SKULLS AND PUT BULLETS IN THEIR HEARTS.
AH, YOU GET A LOT OF BANDITS ON THAT HIGHWAY.
THEY'D BEEN SOLDIERS. THEY WOULD HAVE FOUGHT OFF MERE BANDITS.
THAT DEPENDS...
THIS WAS DEATH, I TELL YOU. DRESSED IN THE COLOR OF DEATH...
A TAVERN YARN. YOU'RE TOO GULLIBLE, TARO
MERE YARNS DO NOT LEAVE BATTLE-HARDENED SOLDIERS DEAD ON THE SIDE OF THE ROAD.
YARNS DO NOT CHASE DOWN KOSUKE AND CUT HIM TO PIECES YARNS DO NOT SET FIRE TO THE KIDO RESTHOUSE AND SHOOT EVERY $*%&@ SOLDIER WHO RUNS OUT...
IN THE NAME OF THE SPIRITS, CAN WE PLEASE STOP TALKING ABOUT--
KABOMMM

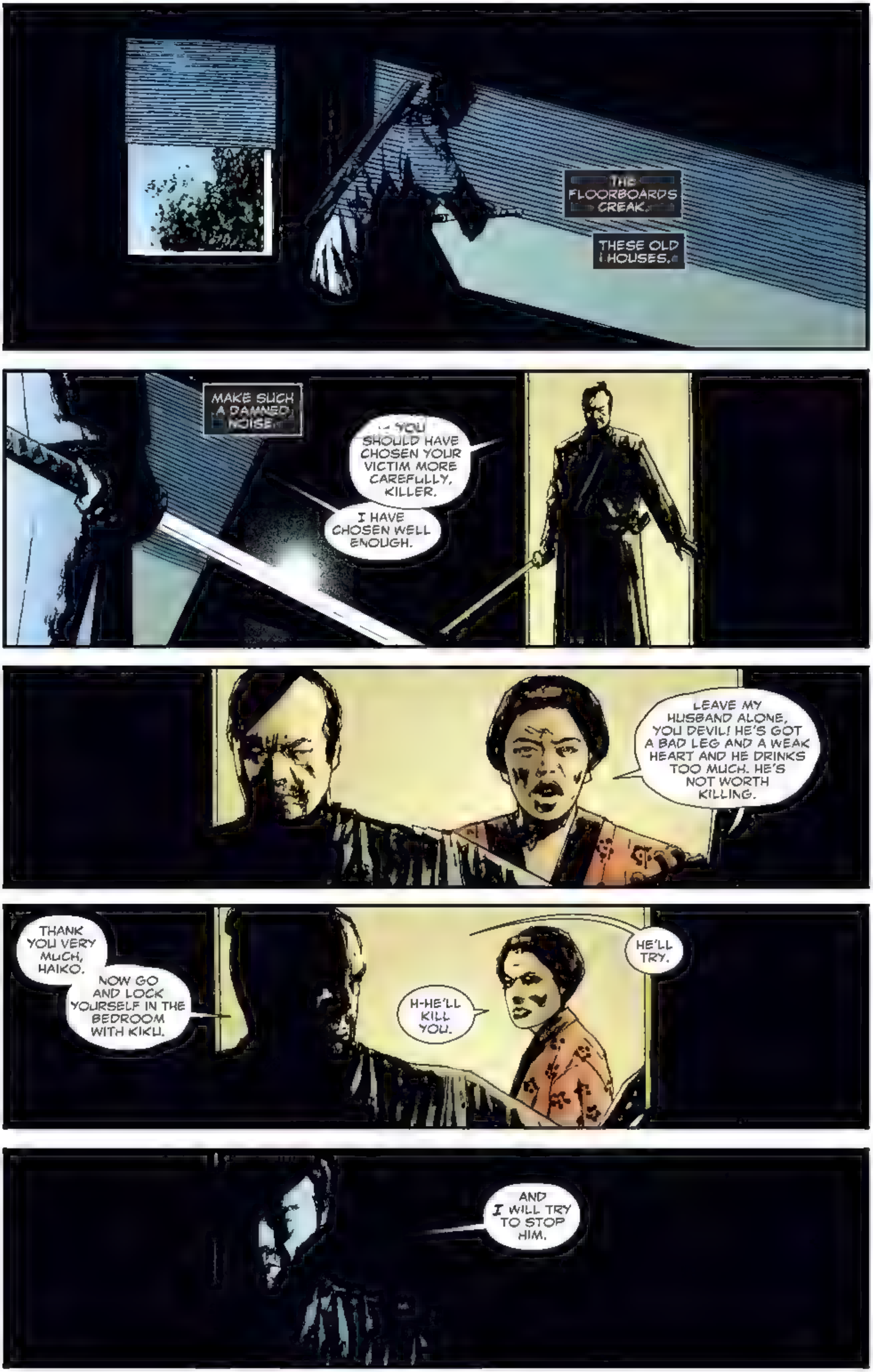

YOU ARE SOLDIERS OF THE *DAIMYO*. YOU RAZED THE HOUSE OF *AKAGI*.
THERE IS NOTHING MORE TO BE SAID.
"THE WAY OF THE SAMURAI IS THE WAY OF DEATH."

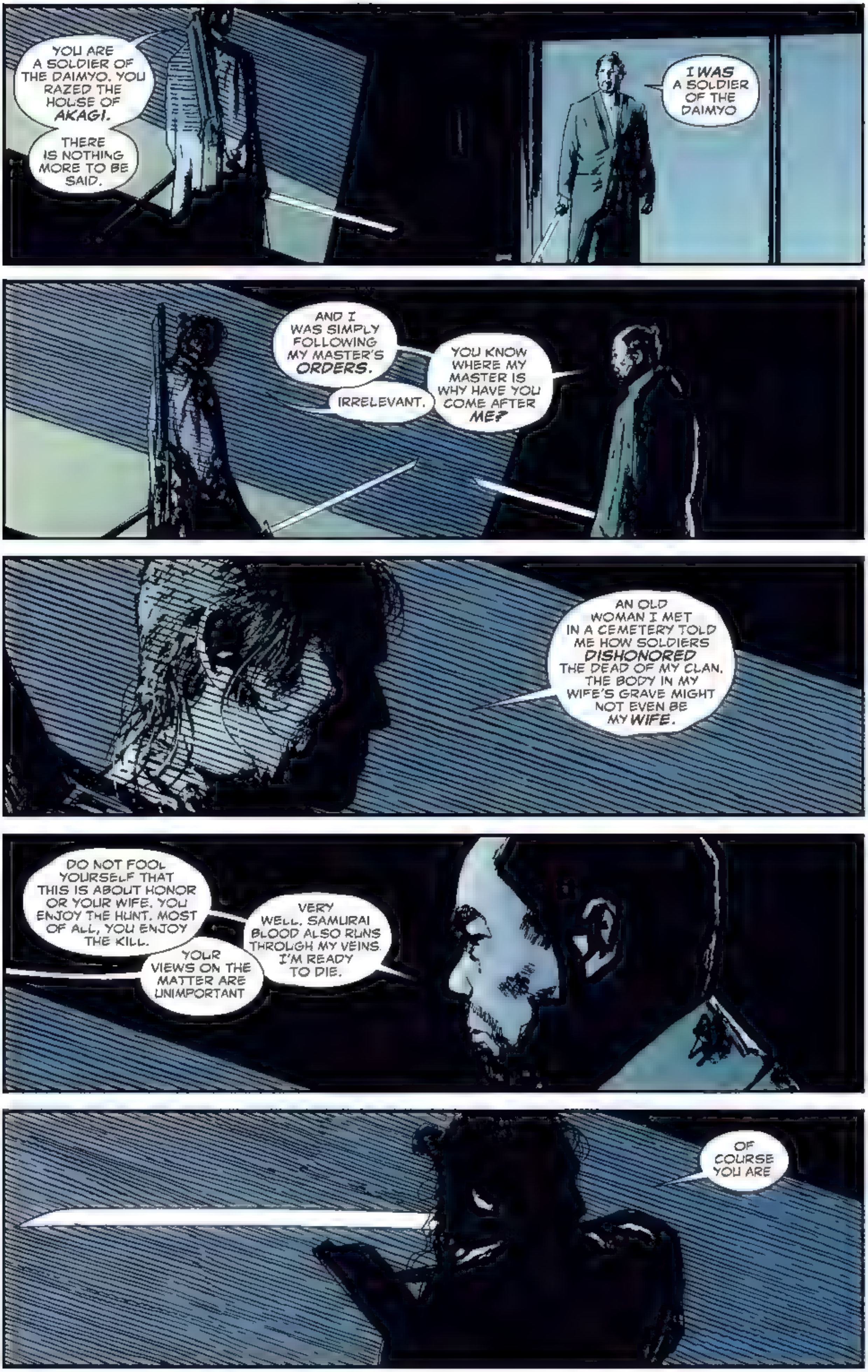

EVERY DAY, A SAMURAI MUST MEDITATE ON DEATH.
INEVITABLE DEATH.
YOU IMAGINE YOUR BODY RIPPED OPEN BY SPEARS.
EVERY DAY...
YOU IMAGINE ARROWS CUTTING INTO YOUR FLESH.
SWORDS TEARING INTO MUSCLE.
RIPPING YOUR GUTS OPEN.
SLSHHH
EVERY DAY...
ARGHH!

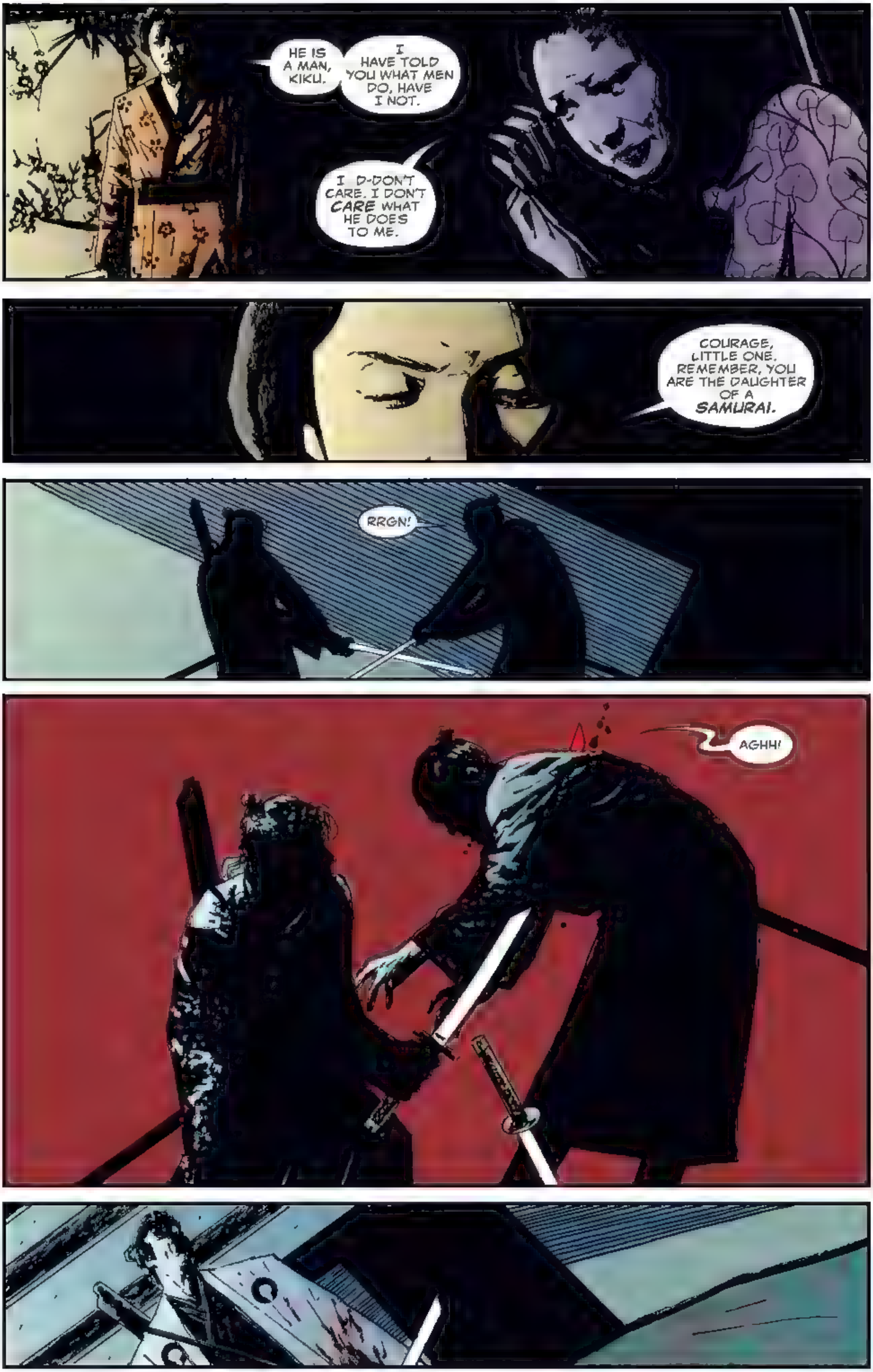

AND THE NEXT DAY, YOU IMAGINE ROCKS CRUSHING YOUR BONES. FIRES BLACKENING YOUR DEAD FLESH.
THEN MORE SPEARS...
MORE BULLETS.
MORE STONES.
AND EVERY DAY WITHOUT FAIL, YOU MUST CONSIDER YOURSELF AS DEAD.
AND THE DAYS TURN TO WEEKS...
AND EVERY DAY, DEATH IS WITH YOU.
THE WEEKS TURN TO MONTHS. WHICH TURN TO YEARS.
AND DEATH IS ALL YOU THINK ABOUT.
DEATH IS ALL YOU HAVE.

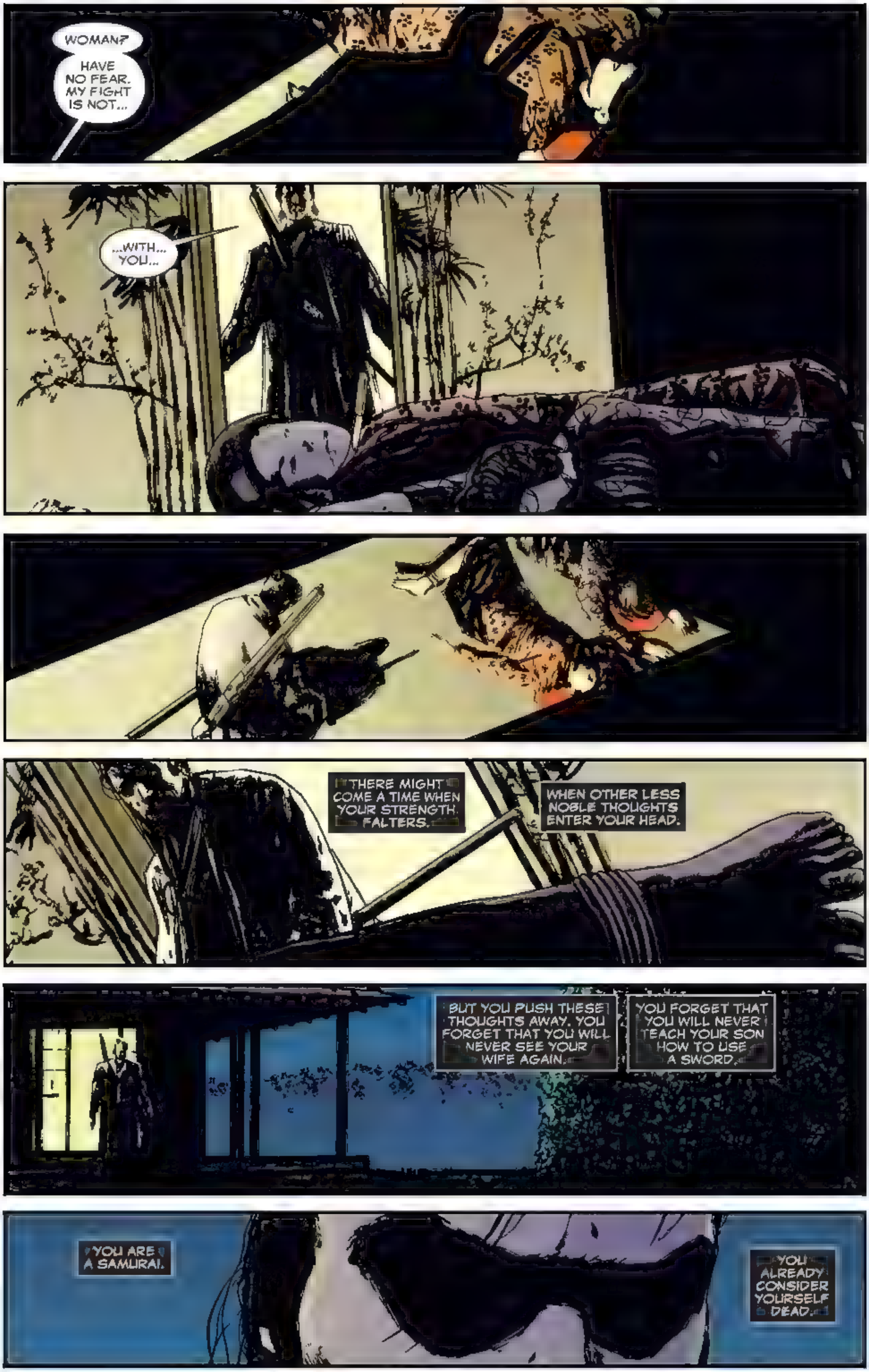

AND THE DAYS PASS--
I'M STILL *ALIVE*, AIN'T I?
I MIGHT BE A CRIPPLE, BUT I CAN LOOK AFTER MYSELF.
HEH, BUT DON'T TELL THE *WIFE* THAT.
I *HEARD* YOU, HUSBAND.
DON'T STAND ON THAT DOORSTEP *GASSING* ALL NIGHT. YOU'RE MAKING THE HOUSE COLD.
WE'RE NOT SUGGESTING YOU CAN'T STILL *FIGHT*, SATO. BUT THIS KILLER HAS STRUCK NEARBY. YOU MIGHT BE HIS NEXT TARGET.
GO HOME, FRIENDS. GET DRUNK. THAT'S WHAT *I* INTEND TO DO
I HAVE A WOUND IN MY SIDE.
IT REFUSES TO HEAL. BUT I DO NOT THINK OF THAT.
I THINK OF ONLY *ONE THING*.
BESIDES.
I ALREADY CONSIDER MYSELF DEAD.

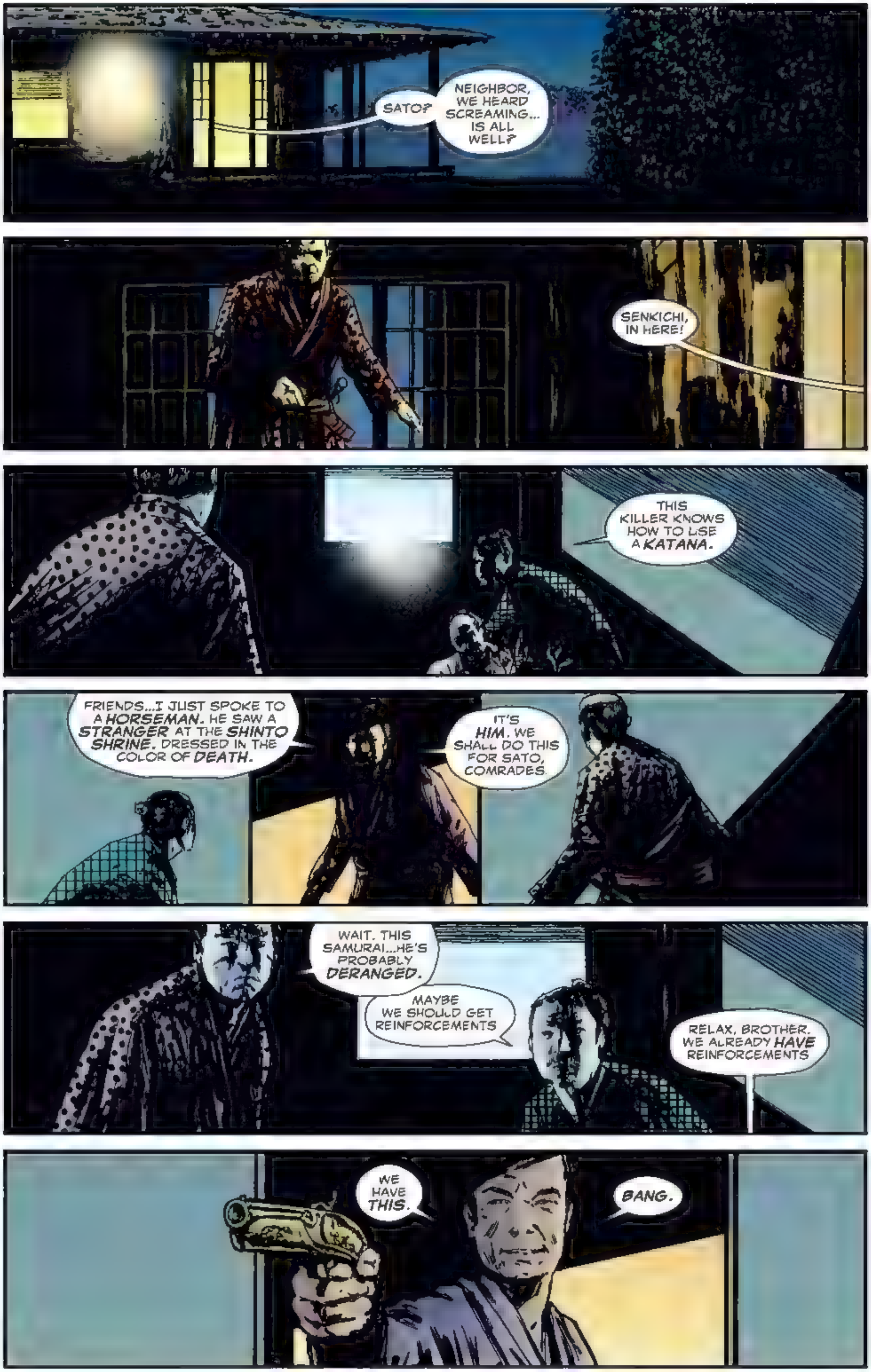

DRINKING AGAIN, HUSBAND?
LEAVE ME ALONE, YOU WITCH.
IF YOUR LEG'S HURTING, YOU SHOULD GO TO BED. I'LL PREPARE SOME **REISHI** MUSHROOMS.
THERE'S NOTHING WRONG WITH MY LEG!
SATO, THIS KILLER...THEY SAY HE PREYS ON THOSE SOLDIERS WHO DISPOSSESSED THE AKAGI CLAN.
DO THEY? NOTHING TO DO WITH ME. ANYWAY, I'VE BEEN RETIRED FOR TWO YEARS.
AND FOR TWO YEARS, I HAVE BEEN AN OBEDIENT WIFE AND NOT SPOKEN OF THIS HOPING THAT YOU'D--
QUIET! I JUST HEARD SOMETHING
KIKU, IS SHE IN BED?
Y-YES SLEEPING FOR AN HOUR.
THEN HE'S COME.

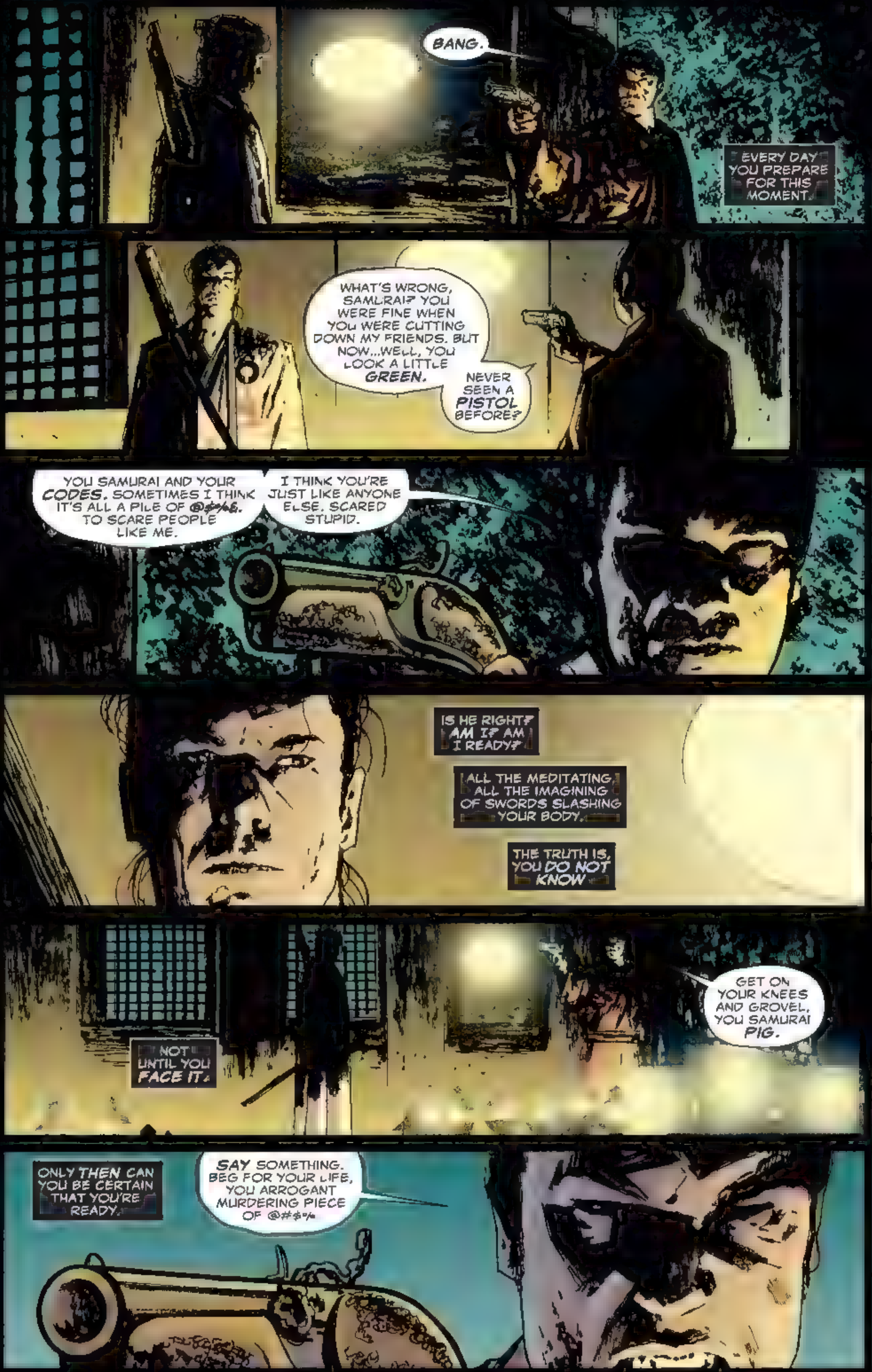

THE FLOORBOARDS CREAK.
THESE OLD HOUSES.
MAKE SUCH A DAMNED NOISE.
...YOU SHOULD HAVE CHOSEN YOUR VICTIM MORE CAREFULLY, KILLER.
I HAVE CHOSEN WELL ENOUGH.
LEAVE MY HUSBAND ALONE, YOU DEVIL! HE'S GOT A BAD LEG AND A WEAK HEART AND HE DRINKS TOO MUCH. HE'S NOT WORTH KILLING.
THANK YOU VERY MUCH, HAIKO.
NOW GO AND LOCK YOURSELF IN THE BEDROOM WITH KIKU.
H-HE'LL KILL YOU.
HE'LL TRY.
AND *I* WILL TRY TO STOP HIM.

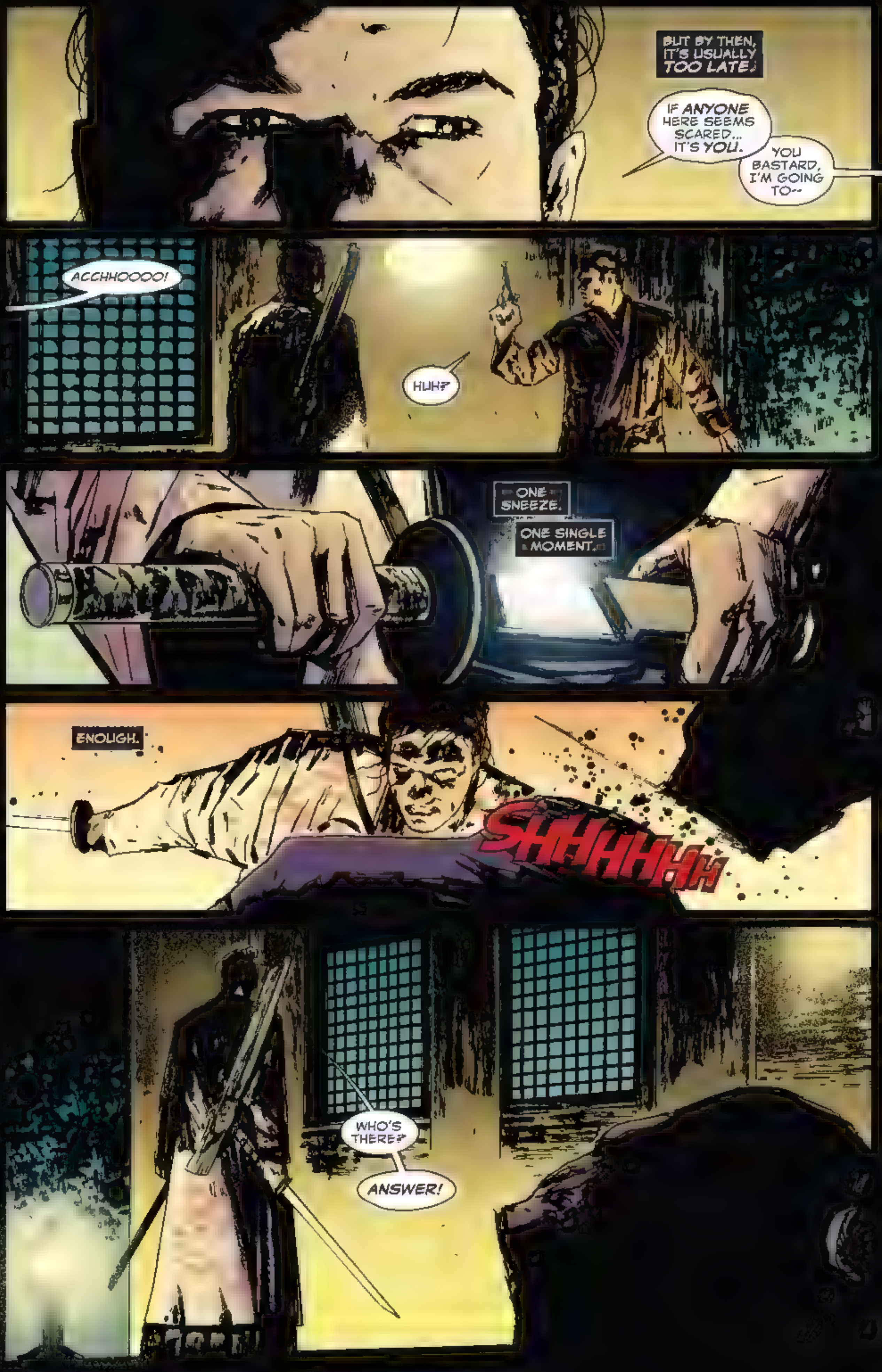

YOU ARE A SOLDIER OF THE DAIMYO. YOU RAZED THE HOUSE OF *AKAGI.*
THERE IS NOTHING MORE TO BE SAID.
I *WAS* A SOLDIER OF THE DAIMYO
AND I WAS SIMPLY FOLLOWING MY MASTER'S *ORDERS.*
IRRELEVANT.
YOU KNOW WHERE MY MASTER IS WHY HAVE YOU COME AFTER *ME?*
AN OLD WOMAN I MET IN A CEMETERY TOLD ME HOW SOLDIERS *DISHONORED* THE DEAD OF MY CLAN. THE BODY IN MY WIFE'S GRAVE MIGHT NOT EVEN BE MY *WIFE.*
DO NOT FOOL YOURSELF THAT THIS IS ABOUT HONOR OR YOUR WIFE. YOU ENJOY THE HUNT. MOST OF ALL, YOU ENJOY THE KILL.
YOUR VIEWS ON THE MATTER ARE UNIMPORTANT
VERY WELL. SAMURAI BLOOD ALSO RUNS THROUGH MY VEINS. I'M READY TO DIE.
OF COURSE YOU ARE

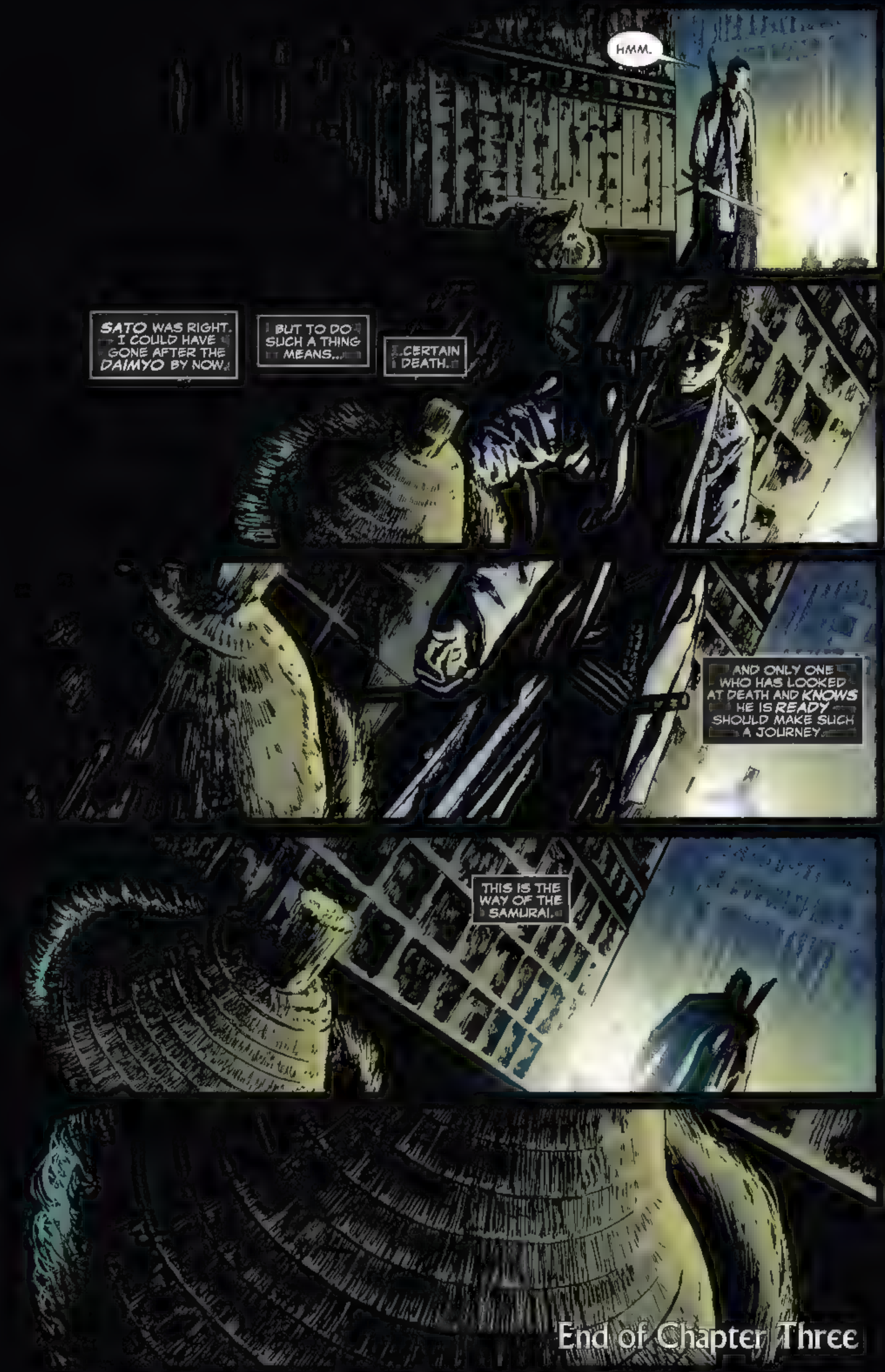

HE IS A MAN, KIKU.
I HAVE TOLD YOU WHAT MEN DO, HAVE I NOT.
I D-DON'T CARE. I DON'T *CARE* WHAT HE DOES TO ME.
COURAGE, LITTLE ONE. REMEMBER, YOU ARE THE DAUGHTER OF A ***SAMURAI.***
RRGN!
AGHH!


WOMAN?
HAVE NO FEAR. MY FIGHT IS NOT...
...WITH... YOU...
THERE MIGHT COME A TIME WHEN YOUR STRENGTH FALTERS.
WHEN OTHER LESS NOBLE THOUGHTS ENTER YOUR HEAD.
BUT YOU PUSH THESE THOUGHTS AWAY. YOU FORGET THAT YOU WILL NEVER SEE YOUR WIFE AGAIN.
YOU FORGET THAT YOU WILL NEVER TEACH YOUR SON HOW TO USE A SWORD.
YOU ARE A SAMURAI.
YOU ALREADY CONSIDER YOURSELF DEAD.


SATO?
NEIGHBOR, WE HEARD SCREAMING... IS ALL WELL?
SENKICHI, IN HERE!
THIS KILLER KNOWS HOW TO USE A *KATANA.*
FRIENDS...I JUST SPOKE TO A *HORSEMAN.* HE SAW A *STRANGER* AT THE *SHINTO SHRINE.* DRESSED IN THE COLOR OF *DEATH.*
IT'S *HIM.* WE SHALL DO THIS FOR SATO, COMRADES.
WAIT. THIS SAMURAI...HE'S PROBABLY *DERANGED.*
MAYBE WE SHOULD GET REINFORCEMENTS.
RELAX, BROTHER. WE ALREADY *HAVE* REINFORCEMENTS.
WE HAVE *THIS.*
BANG.


BANG.
EVERY DAY YOU PREPARE FOR THIS MOMENT.
WHAT'S WRONG, SAMURAI? YOU WERE FINE WHEN YOU WERE CUTTING DOWN MY FRIENDS. BUT NOW...WELL, YOU LOOK A LITTLE GREEN.
NEVER SEEN A PISTOL BEFORE?
YOU SAMURAI AND YOUR CODES. SOMETIMES I THINK IT'S ALL A PILE OF @$%&. TO SCARE PEOPLE LIKE ME.
I THINK YOU'RE JUST LIKE ANYONE ELSE. SCARED STUPID.
IS HE RIGHT? AM I? AM I READY?
ALL THE MEDITATING, ALL THE IMAGINING OF SWORDS SLASHING YOUR BODY.
THE TRUTH IS, YOU DO NOT KNOW
GET ON YOUR KNEES AND GROVEL, YOU SAMURAI PIG.
NOT UNTIL YOU FACE IT.
ONLY THEN CAN YOU BE CERTAIN THAT YOU'RE READY.
SAY SOMETHING. BEG FOR YOUR LIFE, YOU ARROGANT MURDERING PIECE OF @#$%


BUT BY THEN, IT'S USUALLY TOO LATE.
IF ANYONE HERE SEEMS SCARED... IT'S YOU.
YOU BASTARD, I'M GOING TO--
ACCHHOOOO!
HUH?
ONE SNEEZE.
ONE SINGLE MOMENT.
ENOUGH.
SHHHHHH
WHO'S THERE?
ANSWER!


HMM.
SATO WAS RIGHT. I COULD HAVE GONE AFTER THE DAIMYO BY NOW.
BUT TO DO SUCH A THING MEANS...
...CERTAIN DEATH.
AND ONLY ONE WHO HAS LOOKED AT DEATH AND KNOWS HE IS READY SHOULD MAKE SUCH A JOURNEY.
THIS IS THE WAY OF THE SAMURAI.
End of Chapter Three

RONIN 浪人

Chapter Three: The Way Of The Samurai

Writer:
Peter Milligan

Art:
Laurence Campbell

Color Art:
Lee Loughridge

Letters:
VC's Joe Caramagna

Cover:
Giuseppe Camuncoli & Frank D'Armata

Editor:
Sebastian Girner

Editor in Chief:
Axel Alonso

Chief Creative Officer:
Joe Quesada

Publisher:
Dan Buckley

Exec. Producer:
Alan Fine

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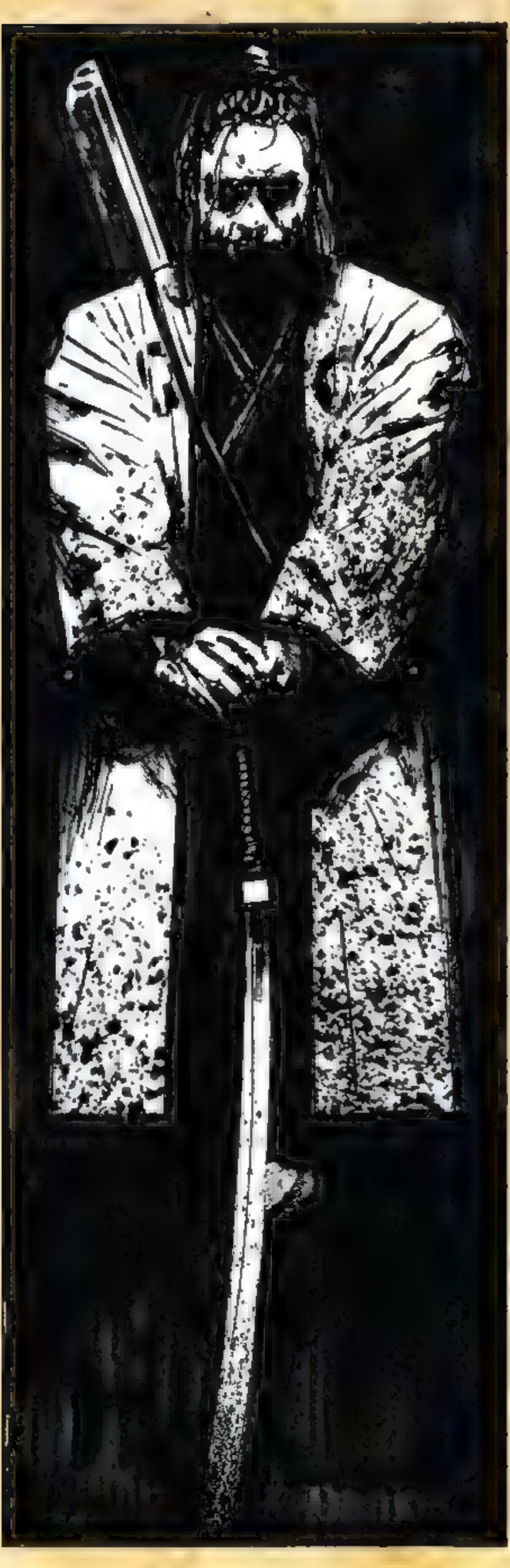

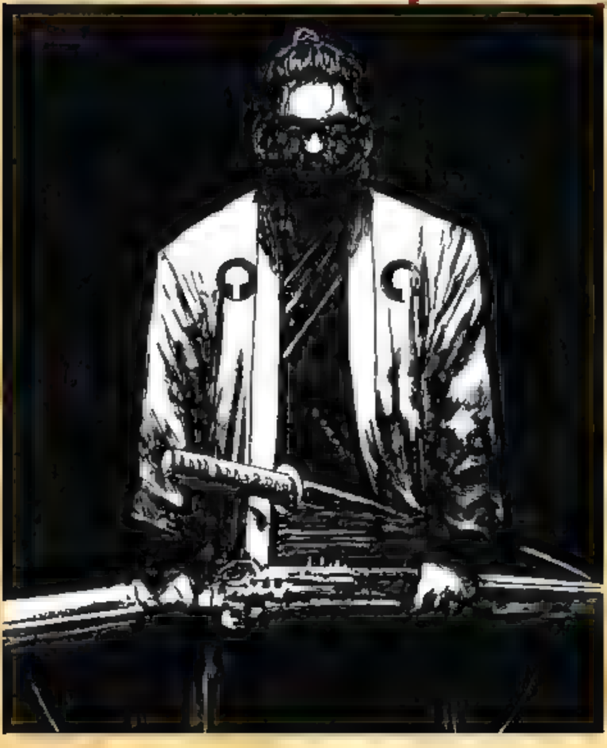

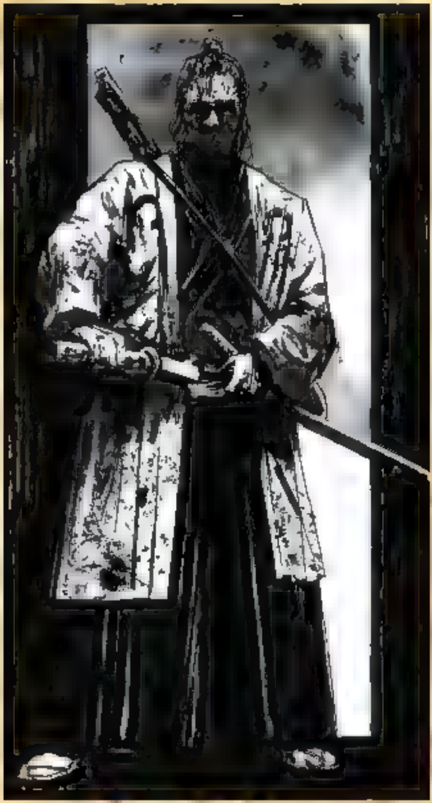

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MILLIGAN
PARLOV
LOUGHRIDGE

"DON'T THINK YOU'LL BE THE FIRST MAN I'VE KILLED ON MY BED."

四 PSYLOCKE

5 RONIN™ 浪人

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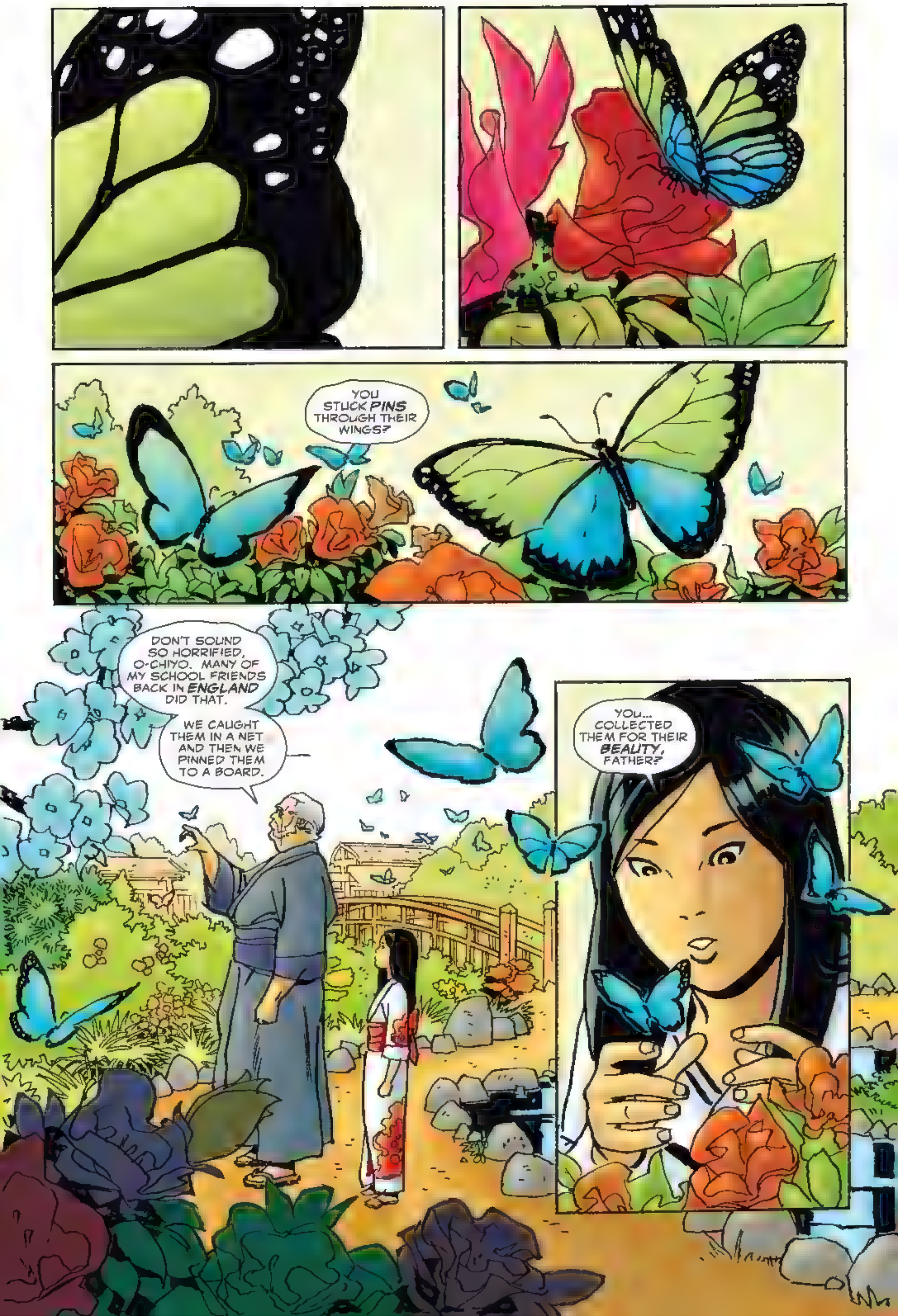
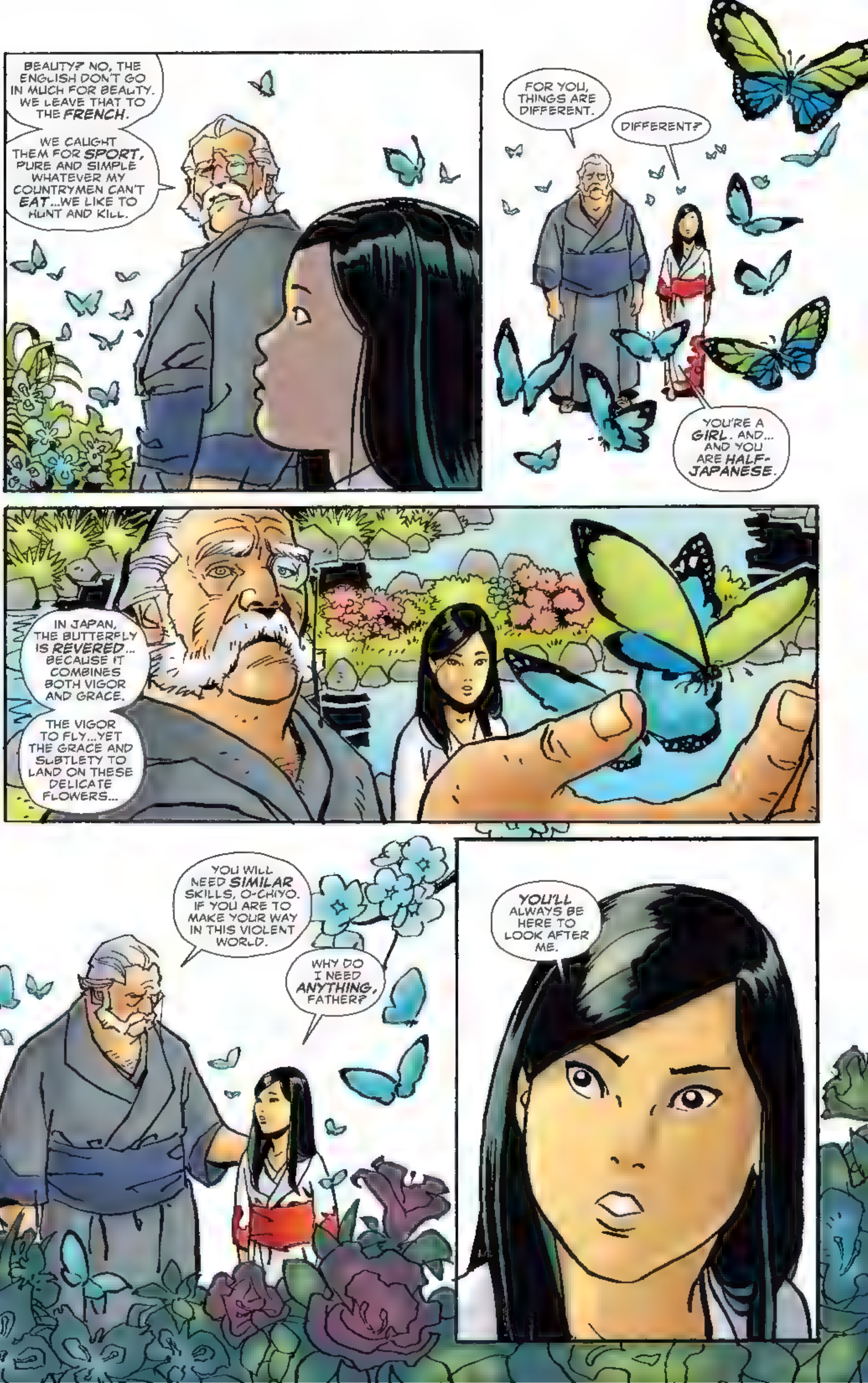
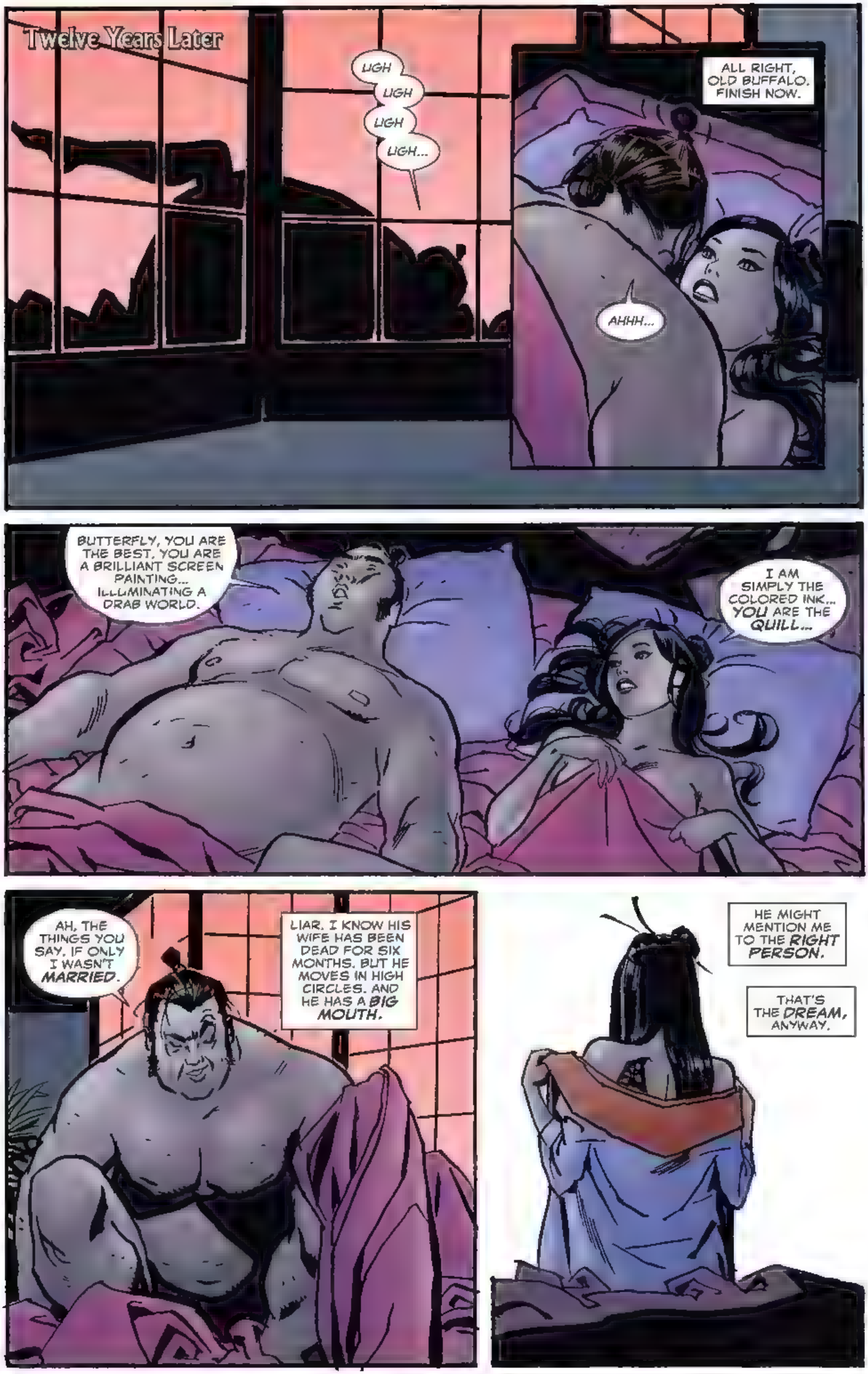
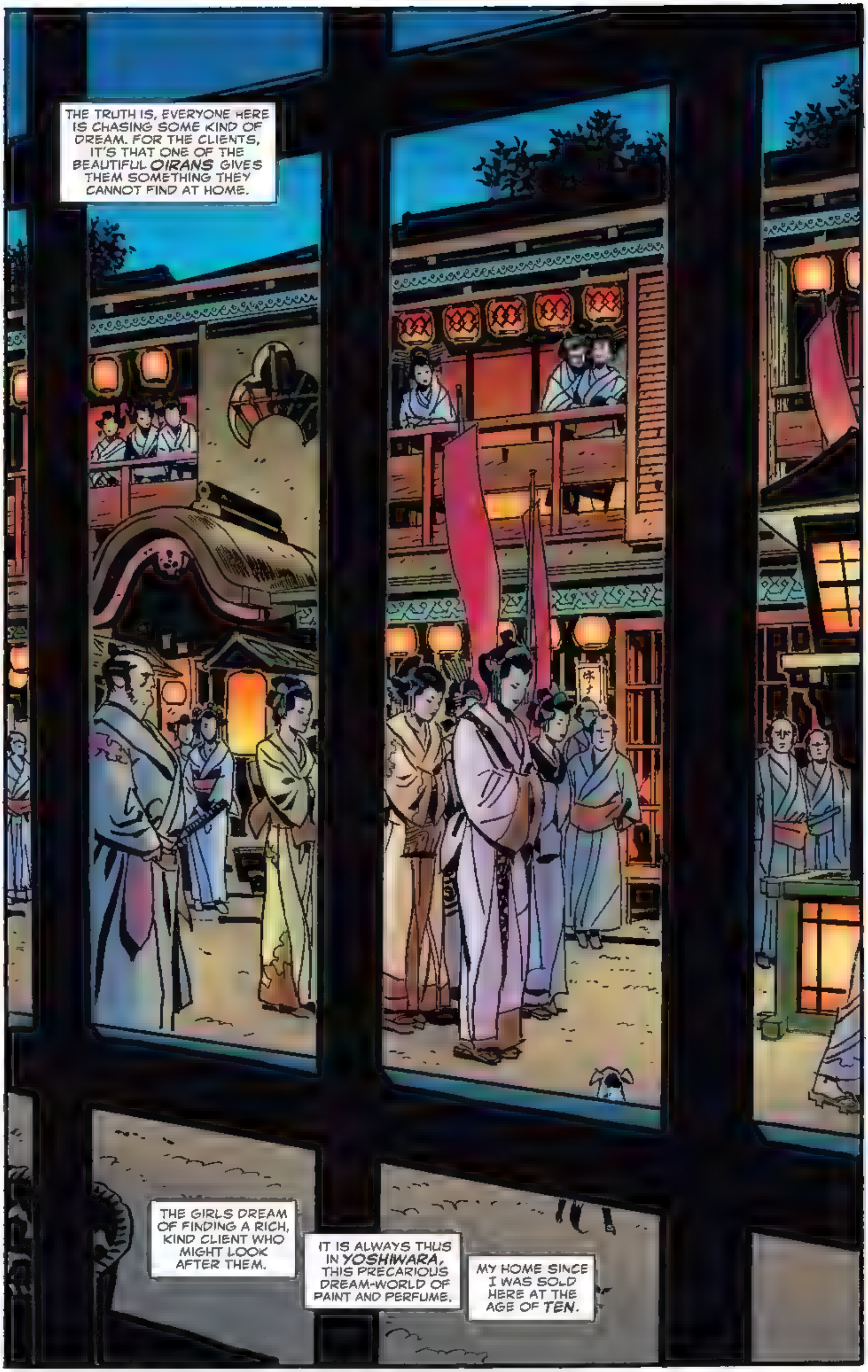
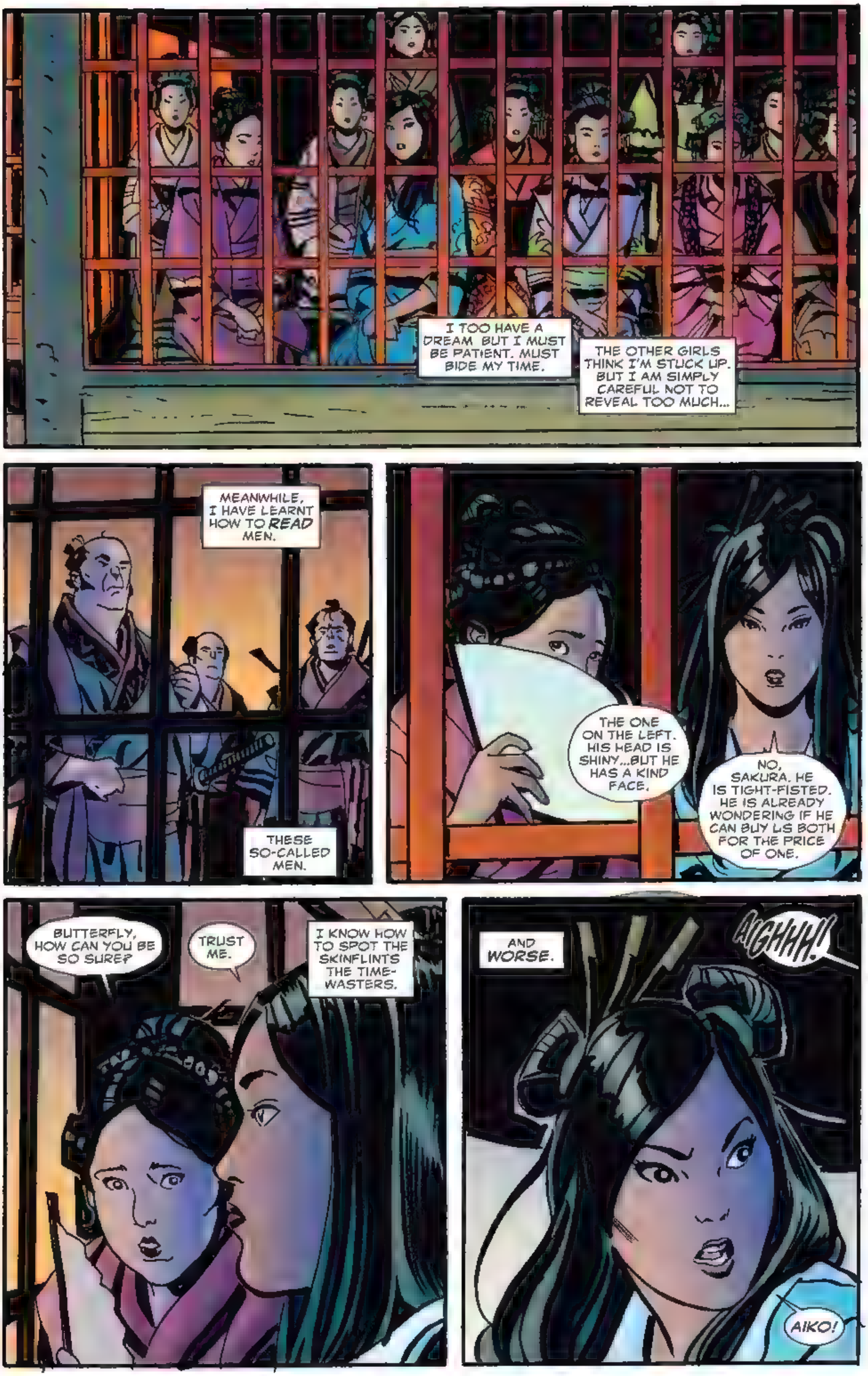
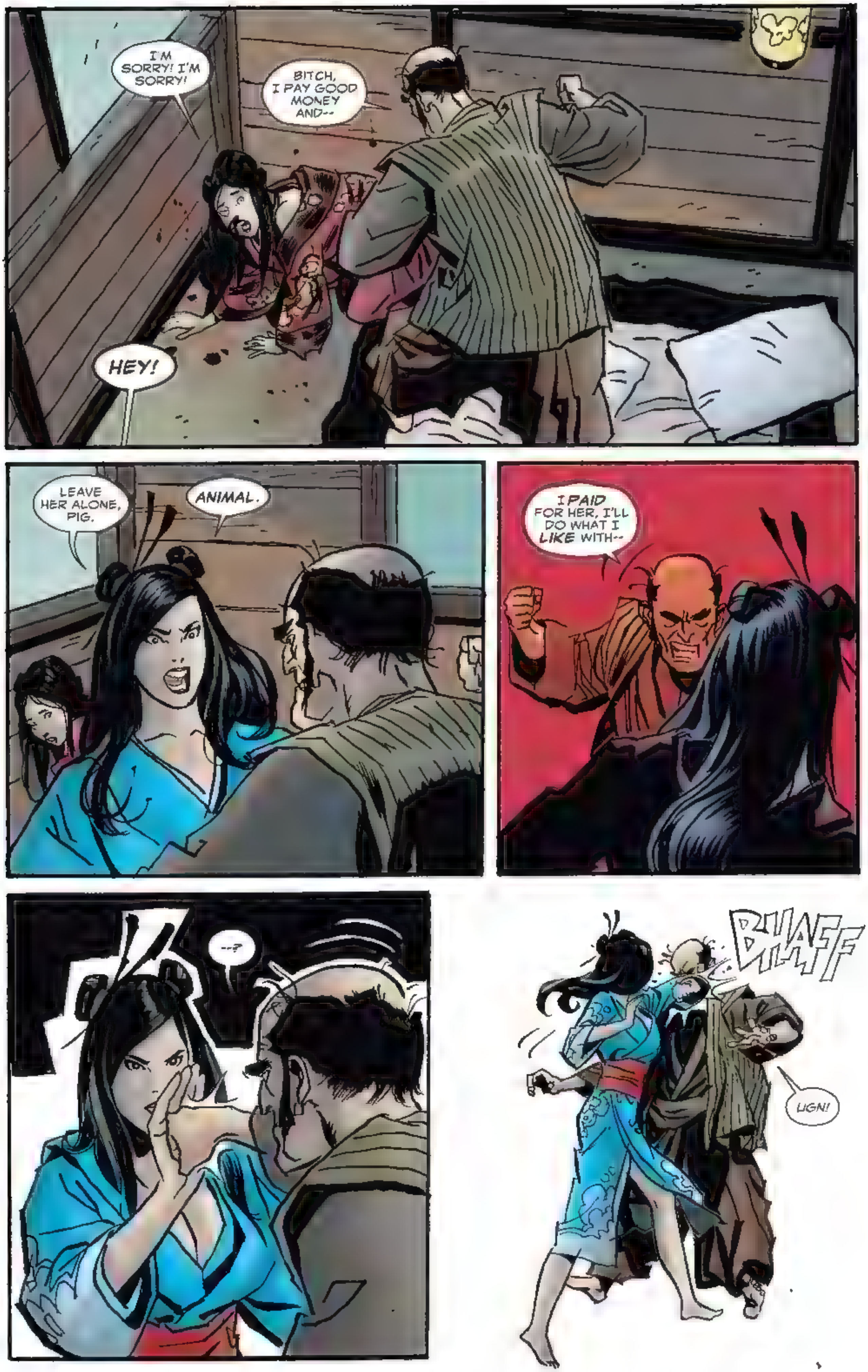

YOU STUCK *PINS* THROUGH THEIR WINGS?
DON'T SOUND SO HORRIFIED, O-CHIYO. MANY OF MY SCHOOL FRIENDS BACK IN *ENGLAND* DID THAT.
WE CAUGHT THEM IN A NET AND THEN WE PINNED THEM TO A BOARD.
YOU... COLLECTED THEM FOR THEIR *BEAUTY*, FATHER?

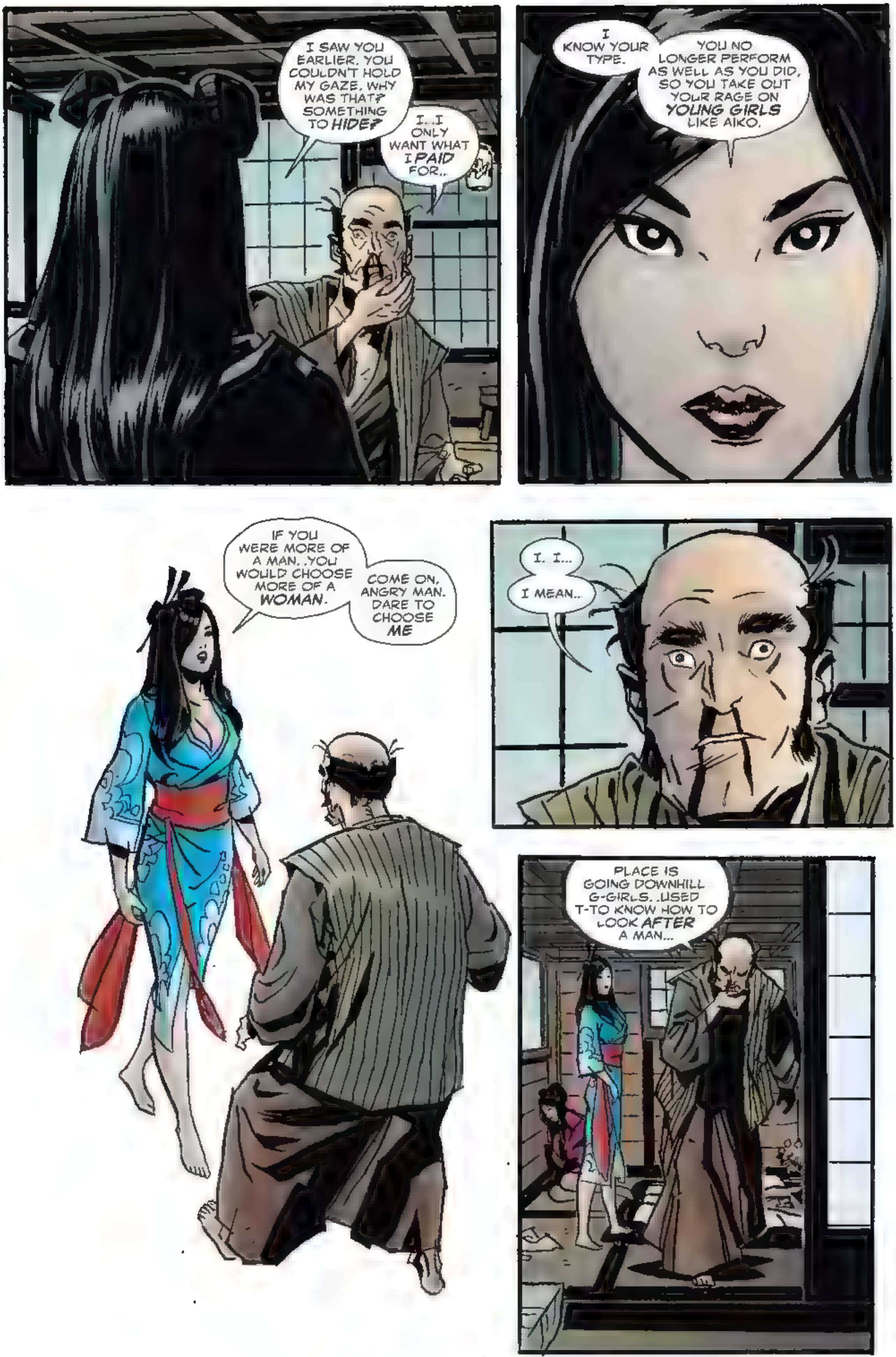

BEAUTY? NO, THE ENGLISH DON'T GO IN MUCH FOR BEAUTY. WE LEAVE THAT TO THE *FRENCH*.
WE CAUGHT THEM FOR *SPORT*, PURE AND SIMPLE. WHATEVER MY COUNTRYMEN CAN'T *EAT*...WE LIKE TO HUNT AND KILL.
FOR YOU, THINGS ARE DIFFERENT.
DIFFERENT?
YOU'RE A *GIRL*. AND... AND YOU ARE *HALF-JAPANESE*.
IN JAPAN, THE BUTTERFLY IS *REVERED*... BECAUSE IT COMBINES BOTH VIGOR AND GRACE.
THE VIGOR TO FLY...YET THE GRACE AND SUBTLETY TO LAND ON THESE DELICATE FLOWERS...
YOU WILL NEED *SIMILAR* SKILLS, O-CHIYO, IF YOU ARE TO MAKE YOUR WAY IN THIS VIOLENT WORLD.
WHY DO I NEED *ANYTHING*, FATHER?
YOU'LL ALWAYS BE HERE TO LOOK AFTER ME.

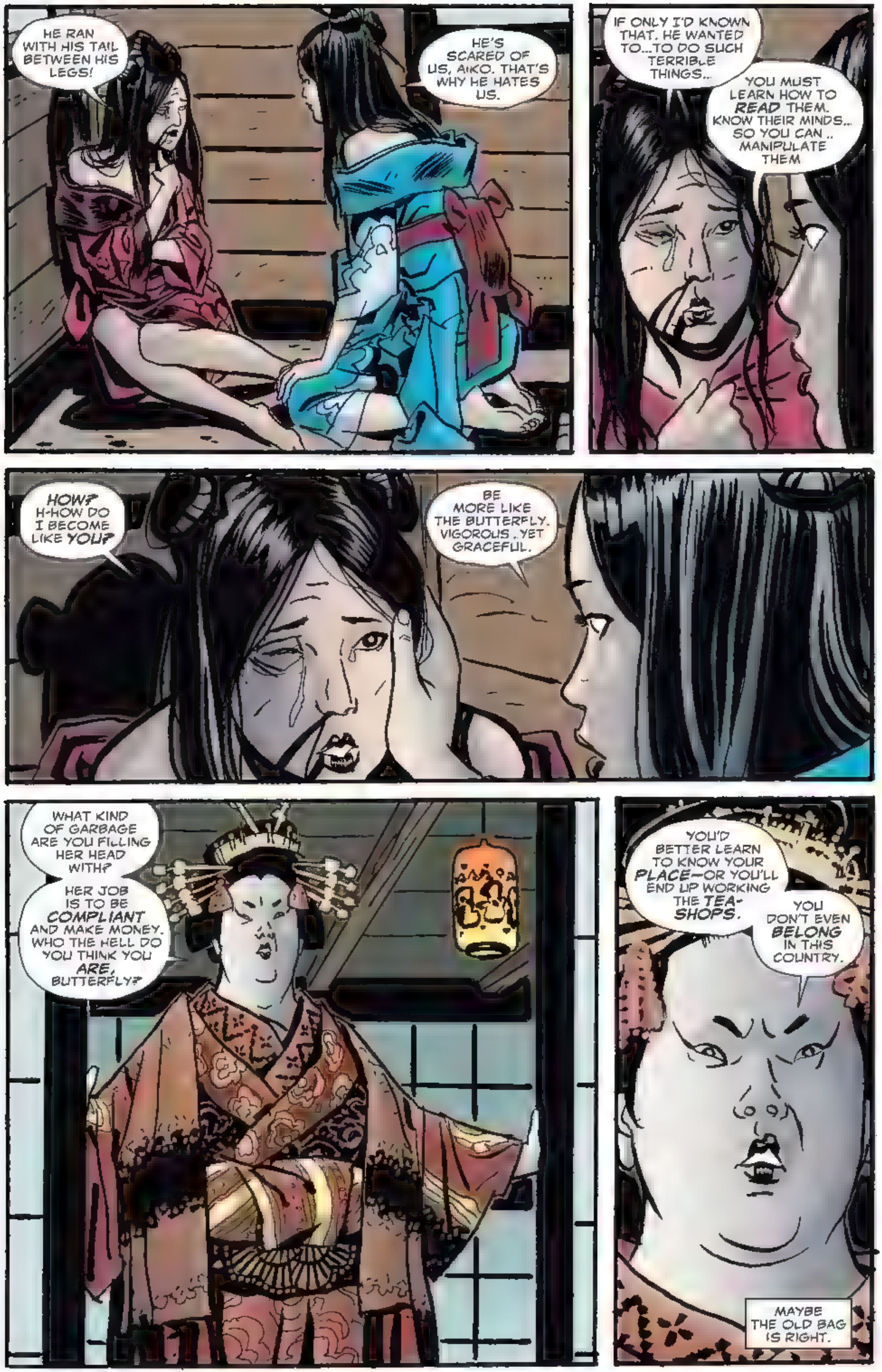

Twelve Years Later
UGH
UGH
UGH
UGH...
ALL RIGHT, OLD BUFFALO. FINISH NOW.
AHHH...
BUTTERFLY, YOU ARE THE BEST. YOU ARE A BRILLIANT SCREEN PAINTING... ILLUMINATING A DRAB WORLD.
I AM SIMPLY THE COLORED INK... YOU ARE THE QUILL...
AH, THE THINGS YOU SAY. IF ONLY I WASN'T MARRIED.
LIAR. I KNOW HIS WIFE HAS BEEN DEAD FOR SIX MONTHS. BUT HE MOVES IN HIGH CIRCLES. AND HE HAS A BIG MOUTH.
HE MIGHT MENTION ME TO THE RIGHT PERSON.
THAT'S THE DREAM, ANYWAY.

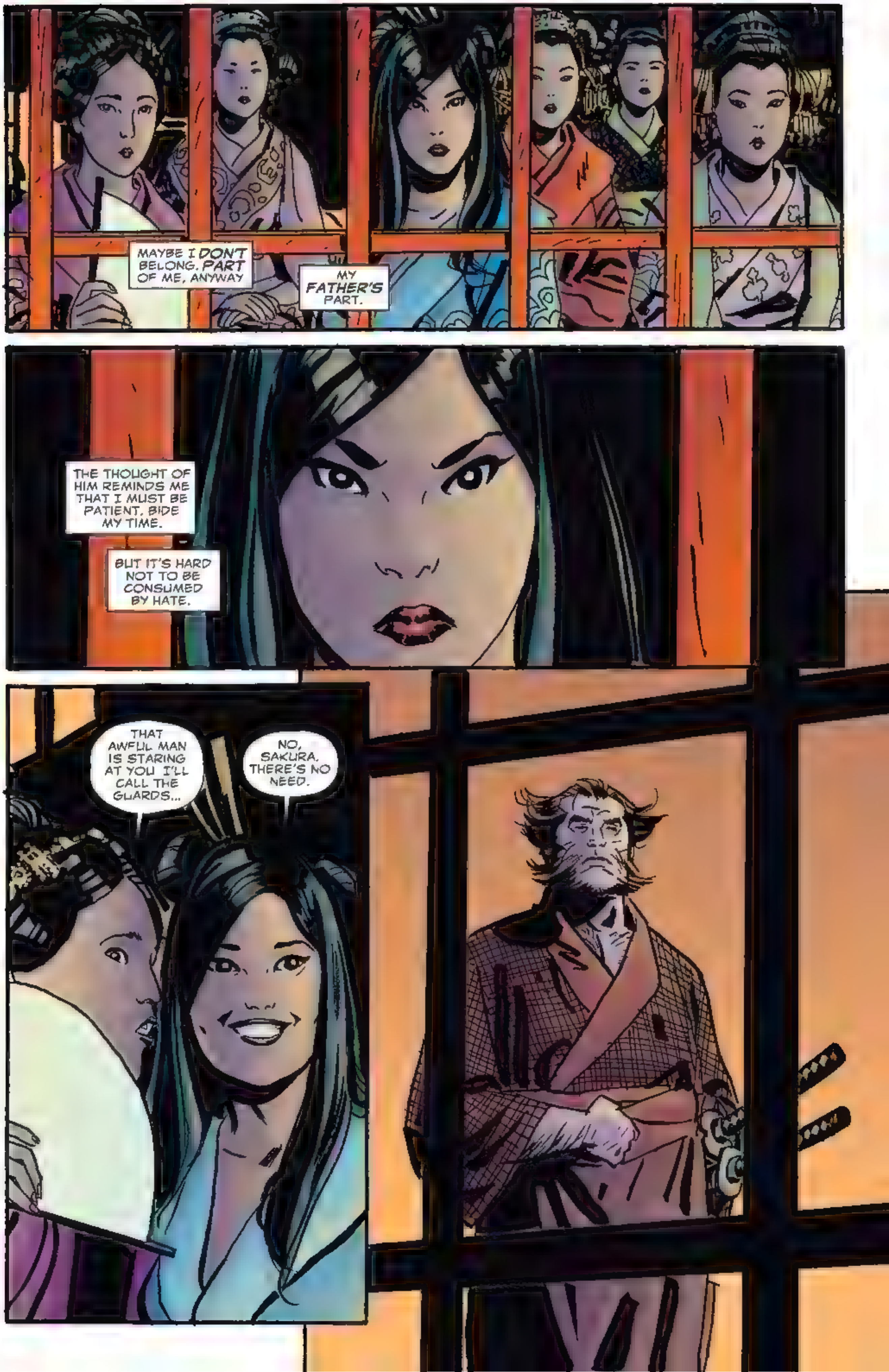

THE TRUTH IS, EVERYONE HERE IS CHASING SOME KIND OF DREAM. FOR THE CLIENTS, IT'S THAT ONE OF THE BEAUTIFUL *OIRANS* GIVES THEM SOMETHING THEY CANNOT FIND AT HOME.
THE GIRLS DREAM OF FINDING A RICH, KIND CLIENT WHO MIGHT LOOK AFTER THEM.
IT IS ALWAYS THUS IN *YOSHIWARA*, THIS PRECARIOUS DREAM-WORLD OF PAINT AND PERFUME.
MY HOME SINCE I WAS SOLD HERE AT THE AGE OF *TEN*.

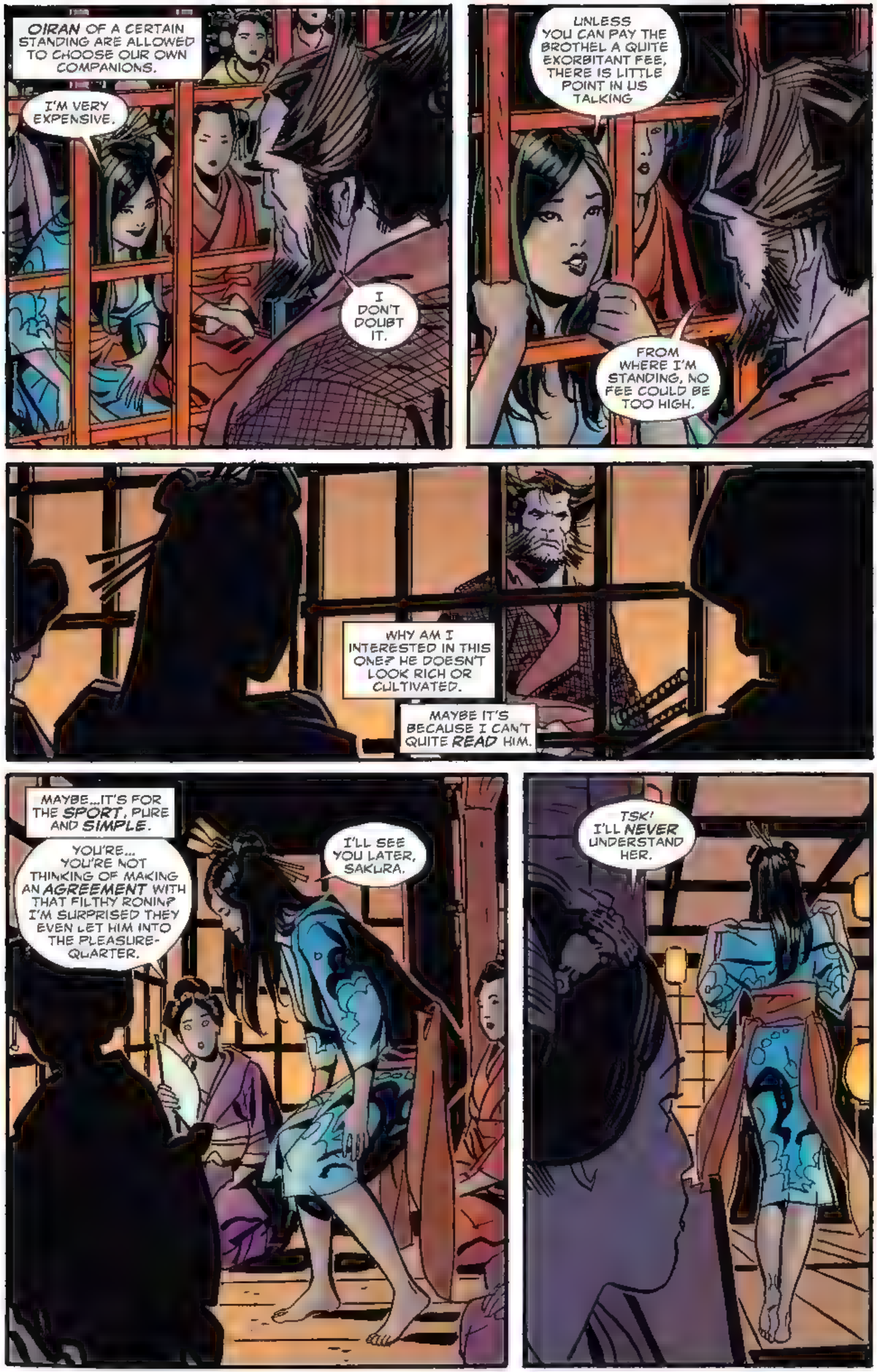

I TOO HAVE A DREAM BUT I MUST BE PATIENT. MUST BIDE MY TIME.
THE OTHER GIRLS THINK I'M STUCK UP. BUT I AM SIMPLY CAREFUL NOT TO REVEAL TOO MUCH...
MEANWHILE, I HAVE LEARNT HOW TO *READ* MEN.
THESE SO-CALLED MEN.
THE ONE ON THE LEFT. HIS HEAD IS SHINY...BUT HE HAS A KIND FACE.
NO, SAKURA. HE IS TIGHT-FISTED. HE IS ALREADY WONDERING IF HE CAN BUY US BOTH FOR THE PRICE OF ONE.
BUTTERFLY, HOW CAN YOU BE SO SURE?
TRUST ME.
I KNOW HOW TO SPOT THE SKINFLINTS THE TIME-WASTERS.
AND *WORSE*.
AIGHHH!
AIKO!

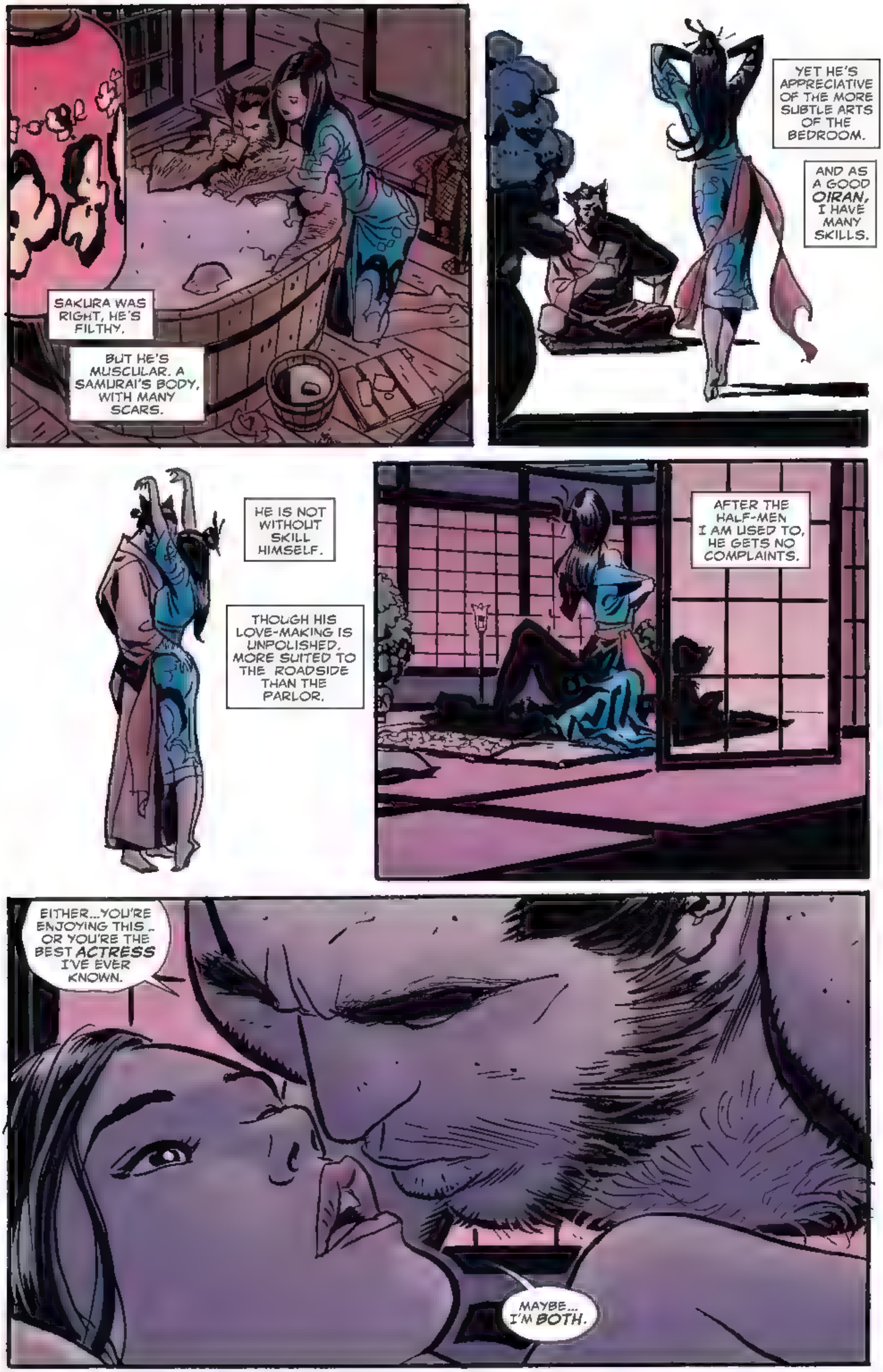

I'M SORRY! I'M SORRY!
BITCH, I PAY GOOD MONEY AND--
HEY!
LEAVE HER ALONE, PIG.
ANIMAL.
I PAID FOR HER, I'LL DO WHAT I LIKE WITH--
--?
BHAFF
UGN!

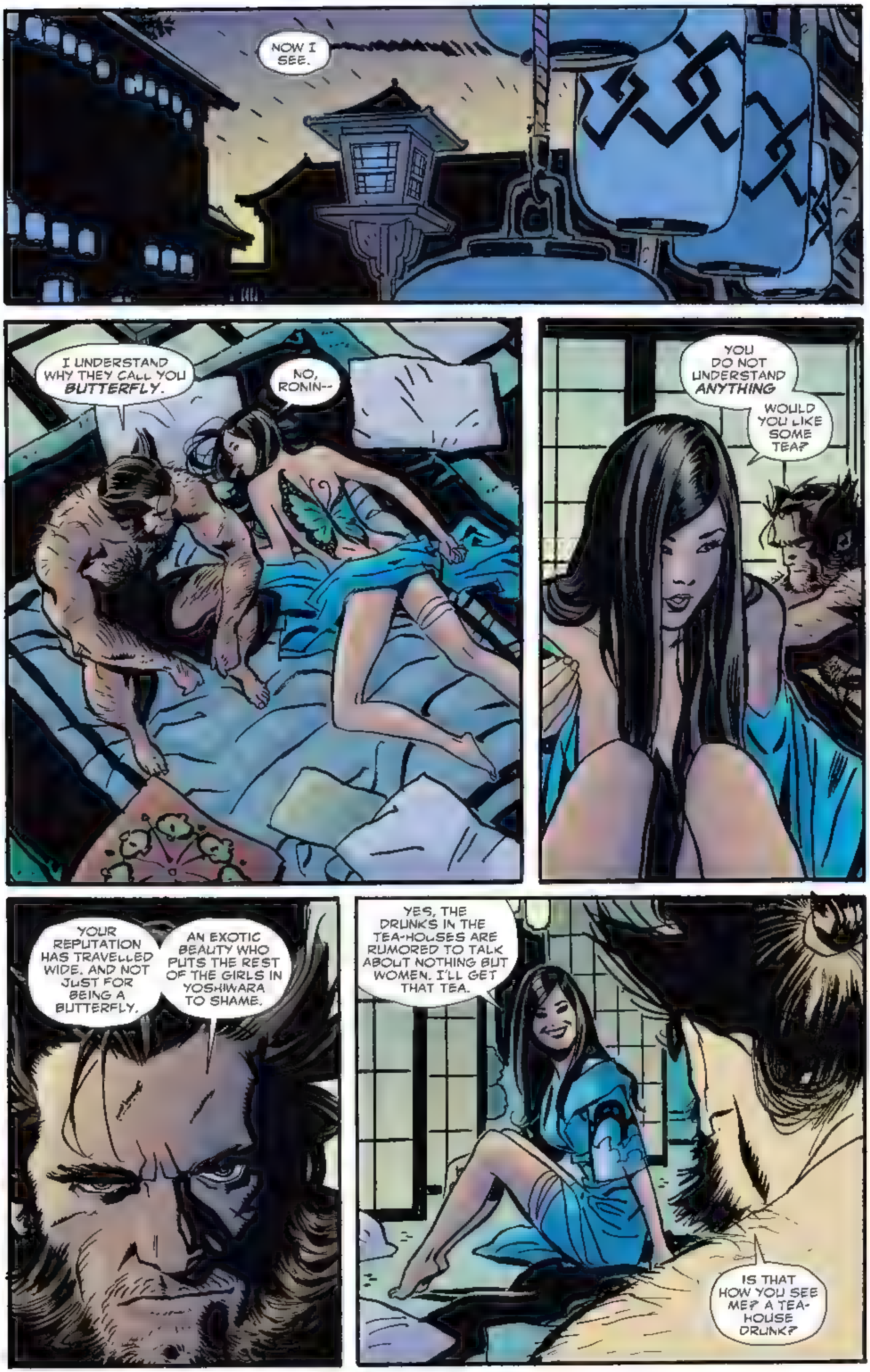

I SAW YOU EARLIER. YOU COULDN'T HOLD MY GAZE. WHY WAS THAT? SOMETHING TO *HIDE?*
I...I ONLY WANT WHAT I *PAID* FOR...
I KNOW YOUR TYPE.
YOU NO LONGER PERFORM AS WELL AS YOU DID, SO YOU TAKE OUT YOUR RAGE ON *YOUNG GIRLS* LIKE AIKO.
IF YOU WERE MORE OF A MAN...YOU WOULD CHOOSE MORE OF A *WOMAN.*
COME ON, ANGRY MAN. DARE TO CHOOSE *ME*
I. I...
I MEAN...
PLACE IS GOING DOWNHILL G-GIRLS...USED T-TO KNOW HOW TO LOOK *AFTER* A MAN...

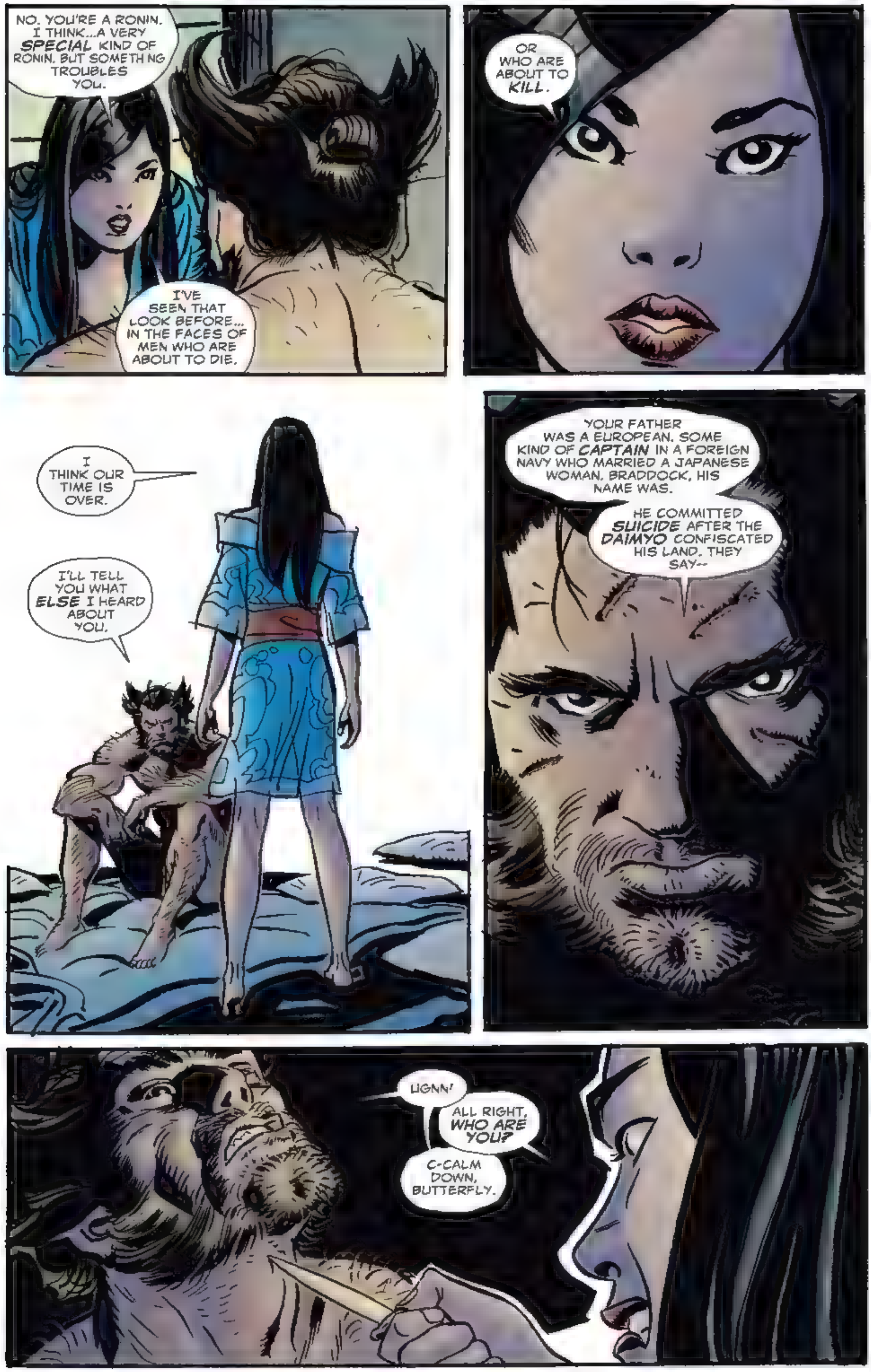

HE RAN WITH HIS TAIL BETWEEN HIS LEGS!
HE'S SCARED OF US, AIKO. THAT'S WHY HE HATES US.
IF ONLY I'D KNOWN THAT. HE WANTED TO...TO DO SUCH TERRIBLE THINGS..
YOU MUST LEARN HOW TO **READ** THEM. KNOW THEIR MINDS... SO YOU CAN .. MANIPULATE THEM
HOW? H-HOW DO I BECOME LIKE ***YOU?***
BE MORE LIKE THE BUTTERFLY. VIGOROUS ..YET GRACEFUL.
WHAT KIND OF GARBAGE ARE YOU FILLING HER HEAD WITH?
HER JOB IS TO BE ***COMPLIANT*** AND MAKE MONEY. WHO THE HELL DO YOU THINK YOU ***ARE,*** BUTTERFLY?
YOU'D BETTER LEARN TO KNOW YOUR ***PLACE***—OR YOU'LL END UP WORKING THE ***TEA-SHOPS.***
YOU DON'T EVEN ***BELONG*** IN THIS COUNTRY.
MAYBE THE OLD BAG IS RIGHT.

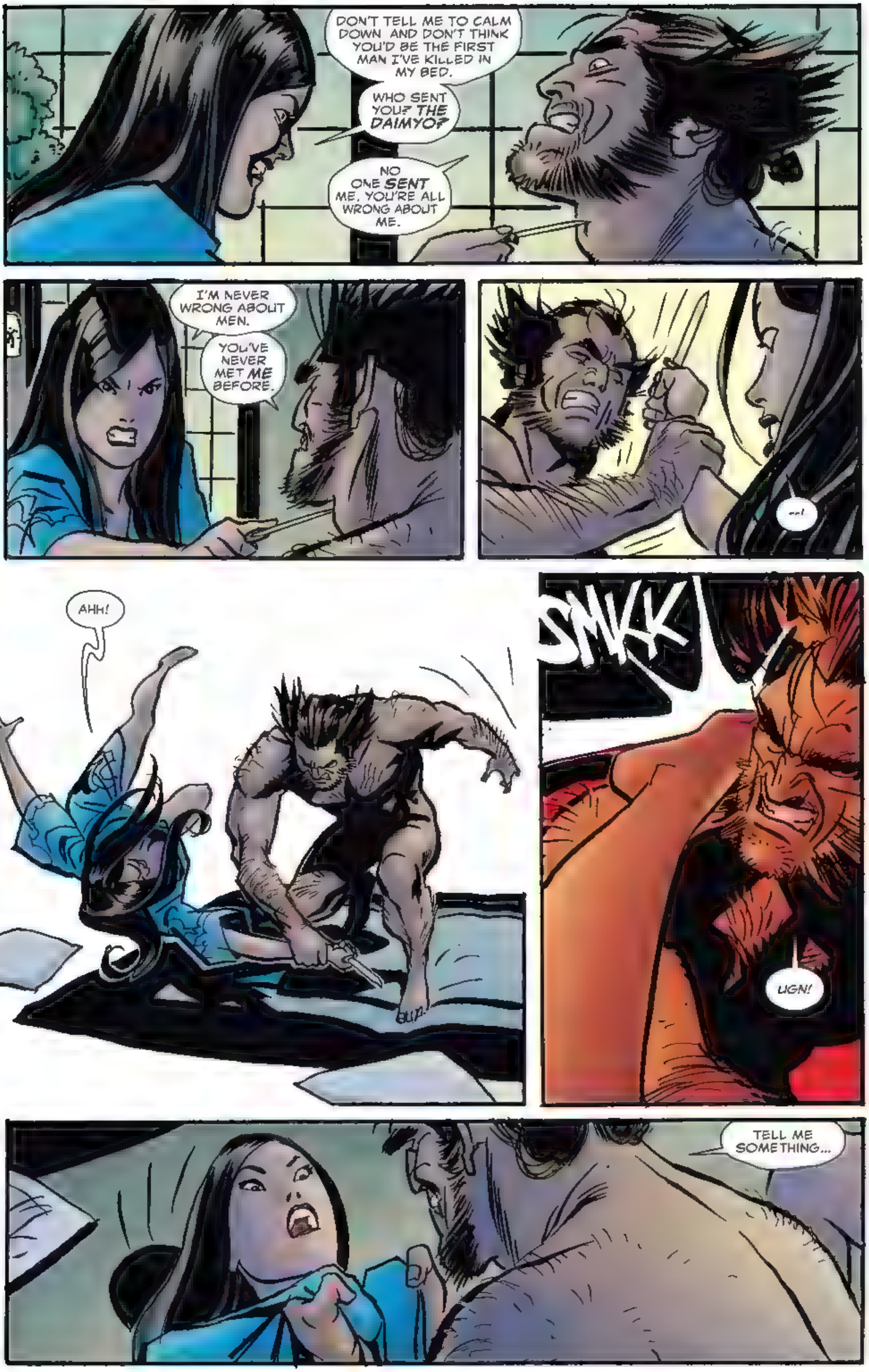

MAYBE I *DON'T* BELONG. *PART* OF ME, ANYWAY
MY *FATHER'S* PART.
THE THOUGHT OF HIM REMINDS ME THAT I MUST BE PATIENT. BIDE MY TIME.
BUT IT'S HARD NOT TO BE CONSUMED BY HATE.
THAT AWFUL MAN IS STARING AT YOU I'LL CALL THE GUARDS...
NO, SAKURA. THERE'S NO NEED.

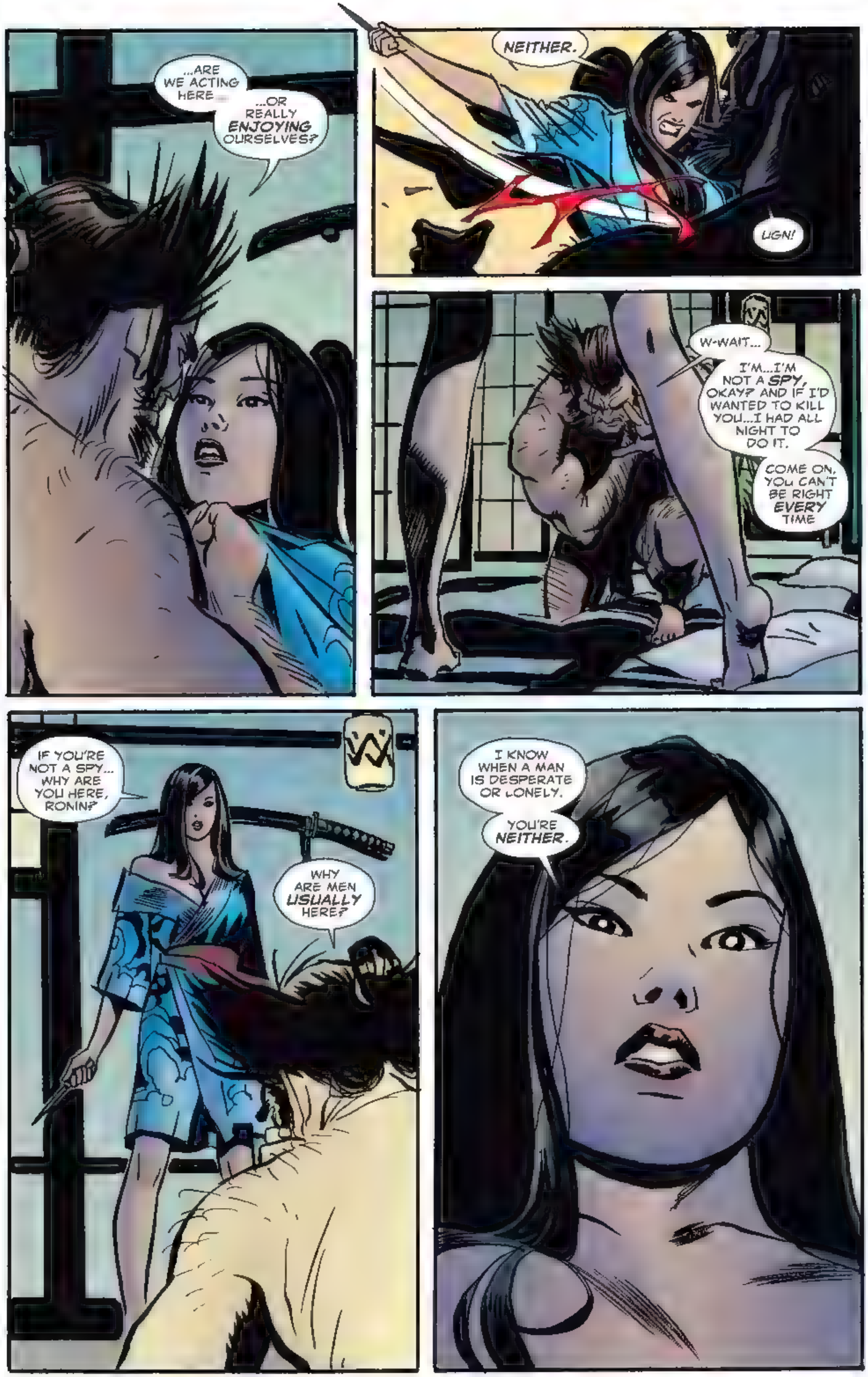

OIRAN OF A CERTAIN STANDING ARE ALLOWED TO CHOOSE OUR OWN COMPANIONS.
I'M VERY EXPENSIVE.
I DON'T DOUBT IT.
UNLESS YOU CAN PAY THE BROTHEL A QUITE EXORBITANT FEE, THERE IS LITTLE POINT IN US TALKING
FROM WHERE I'M STANDING, NO FEE COULD BE TOO HIGH.
WHY AM I INTERESTED IN THIS ONE? HE DOESN'T LOOK RICH OR CULTIVATED.
MAYBE IT'S BECAUSE I CAN'T QUITE ***READ*** HIM.
MAYBE...IT'S FOR THE ***SPORT***, PURE AND ***SIMPLE***.
YOU'RE... YOU'RE NOT THINKING OF MAKING AN ***AGREEMENT*** WITH THAT FILTHY RONIN? I'M SURPRISED THEY EVEN LET HIM INTO THE PLEASURE-QUARTER.
I'LL SEE YOU LATER, SAKURA.
TSK! I'LL ***NEVER*** UNDERSTAND HER.

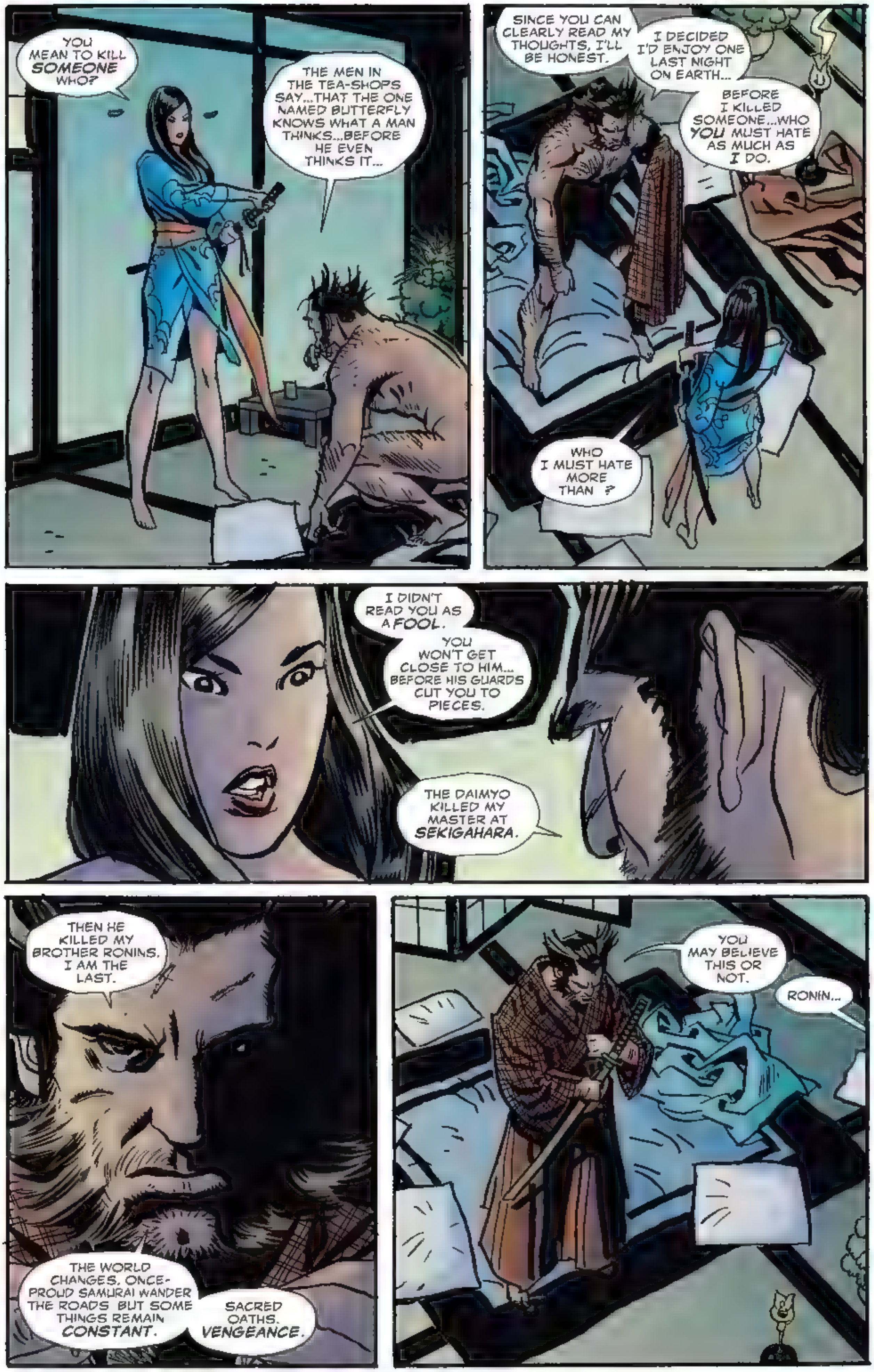

SAKURA WAS RIGHT, HE'S FILTHY.
BUT HE'S MUSCULAR. A SAMURAI'S BODY, WITH MANY SCARS.
YET HE'S APPRECIATIVE OF THE MORE SUBTLE ARTS OF THE BEDROOM.
AND AS A GOOD OIRAN, I HAVE MANY SKILLS.
HE IS NOT WITHOUT SKILL HIMSELF.
THOUGH HIS LOVE-MAKING IS UNPOLISHED, MORE SUITED TO THE ROADSIDE THAN THE PARLOR.
AFTER THE HALF-MEN I AM USED TO, HE GETS NO COMPLAINTS.
EITHER...YOU'RE ENJOYING THIS... OR YOU'RE THE BEST ACTRESS I'VE EVER KNOWN.
MAYBE... I'M BOTH.

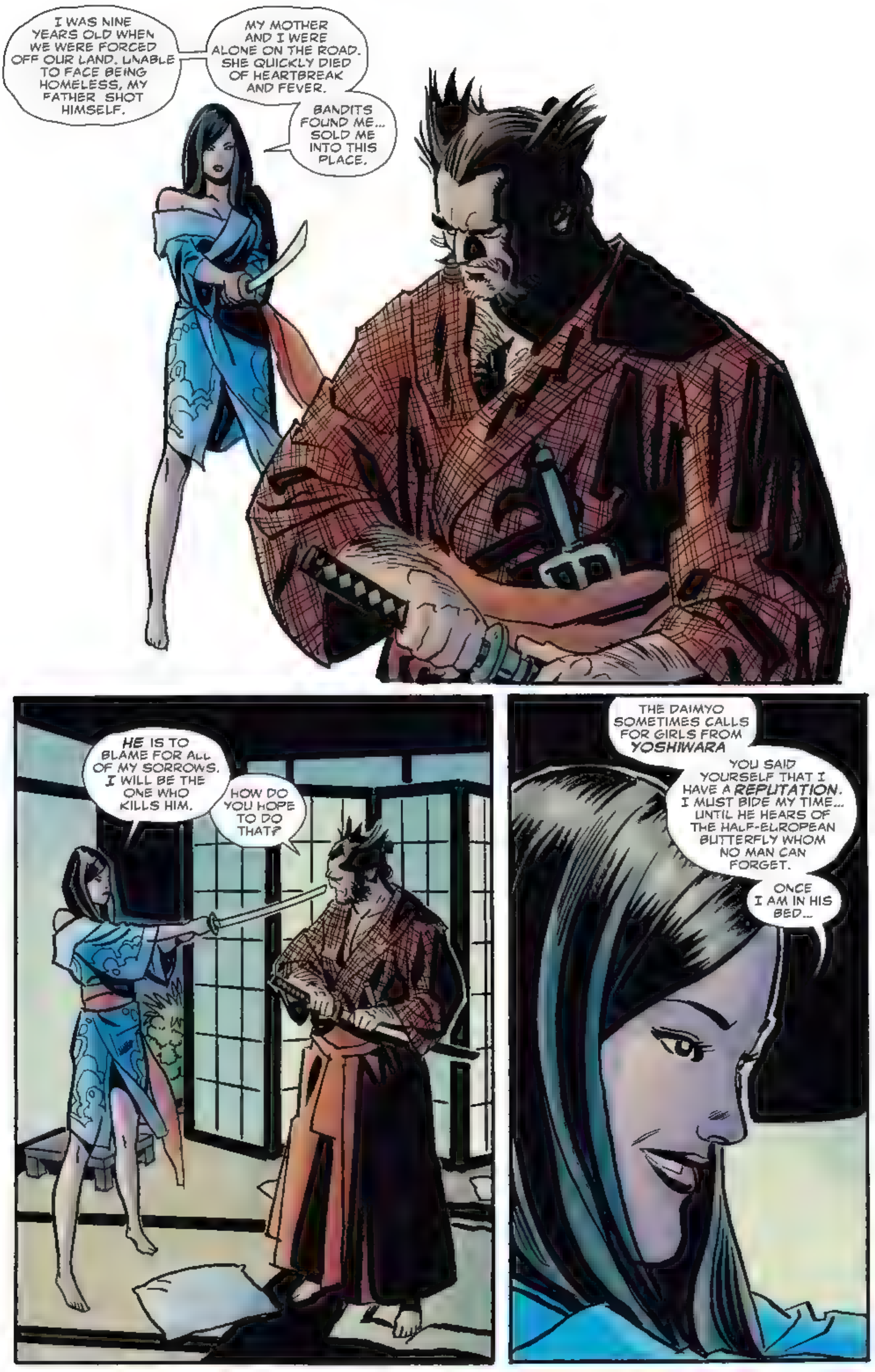

NOW I SEE.
I UNDERSTAND WHY THEY CALL YOU *BUTTERFLY*.
NO, RONIN--
YOU DO NOT UNDERSTAND *ANYTHING*
WOULD YOU LIKE SOME TEA?
YOUR REPUTATION HAS TRAVELLED WIDE. AND NOT JUST FOR BEING A BUTTERFLY.
AN EXOTIC BEAUTY WHO PUTS THE REST OF THE GIRLS IN YOSHIWARA TO SHAME.
YES, THE DRUNKS IN THE TEA-HOUSES ARE RUMORED TO TALK ABOUT NOTHING BUT WOMEN. I'LL GET THAT TEA.
IS THAT HOW YOU SEE ME? A TEA-HOUSE DRUNK?

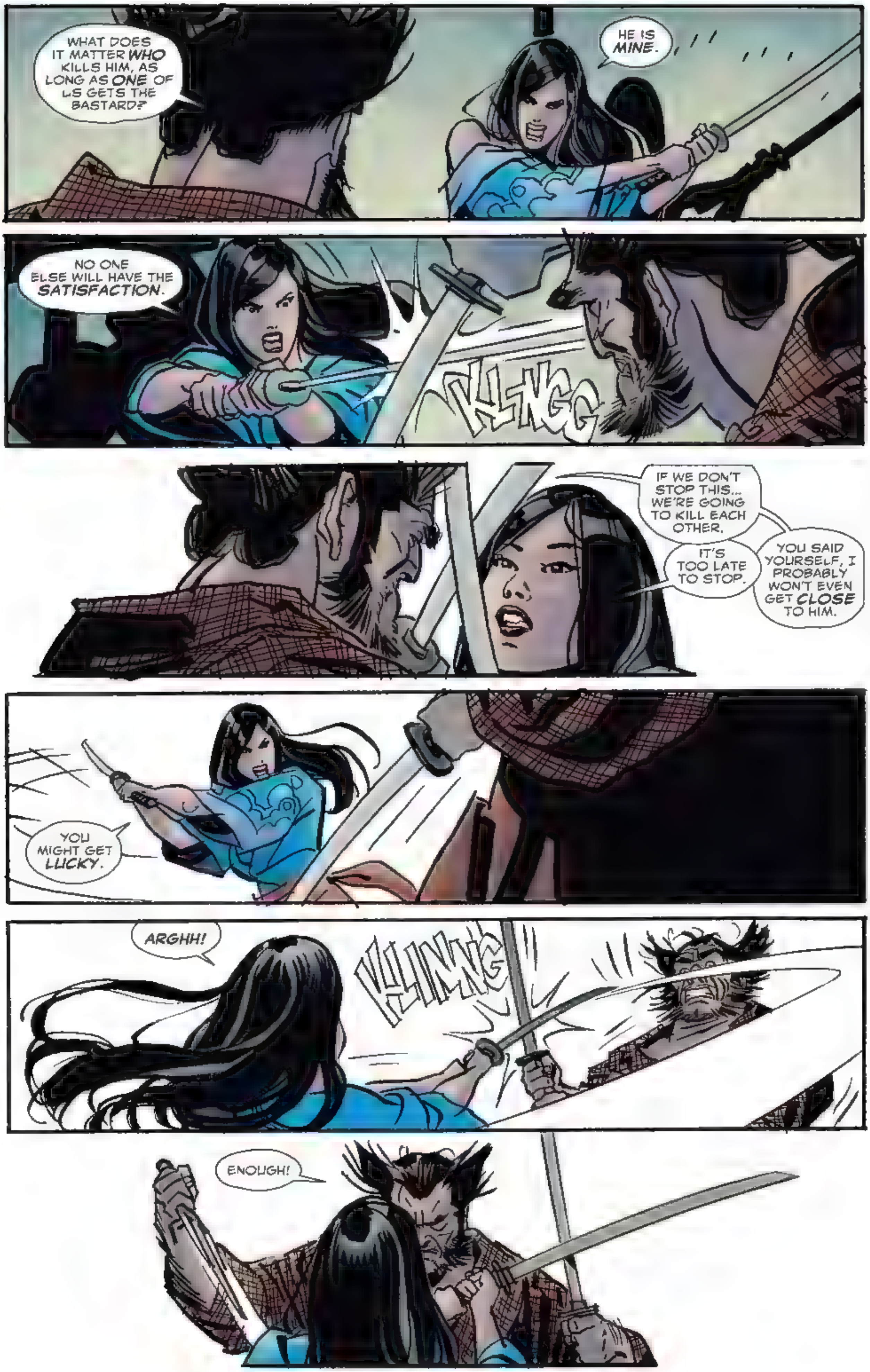

NO. YOU'RE A RONIN. I THINK...A VERY SPECIAL KIND OF RONIN. BUT SOMETHING TROUBLES YOU.
I'VE SEEN THAT LOOK BEFORE... IN THE FACES OF MEN WHO ARE ABOUT TO DIE.
OR WHO ARE ABOUT TO KILL.
I THINK OUR TIME IS OVER.
I'LL TELL YOU WHAT ELSE I HEARD ABOUT YOU.
YOUR FATHER WAS A EUROPEAN. SOME KIND OF CAPTAIN IN A FOREIGN NAVY WHO MARRIED A JAPANESE WOMAN. BRADDOCK, HIS NAME WAS.
HE COMMITTED SUICIDE AFTER THE DAIMYO CONFISCATED HIS LAND. THEY SAY--
UGNN!
ALL RIGHT, WHO ARE YOU?
C-CALM DOWN, BUTTERFLY.

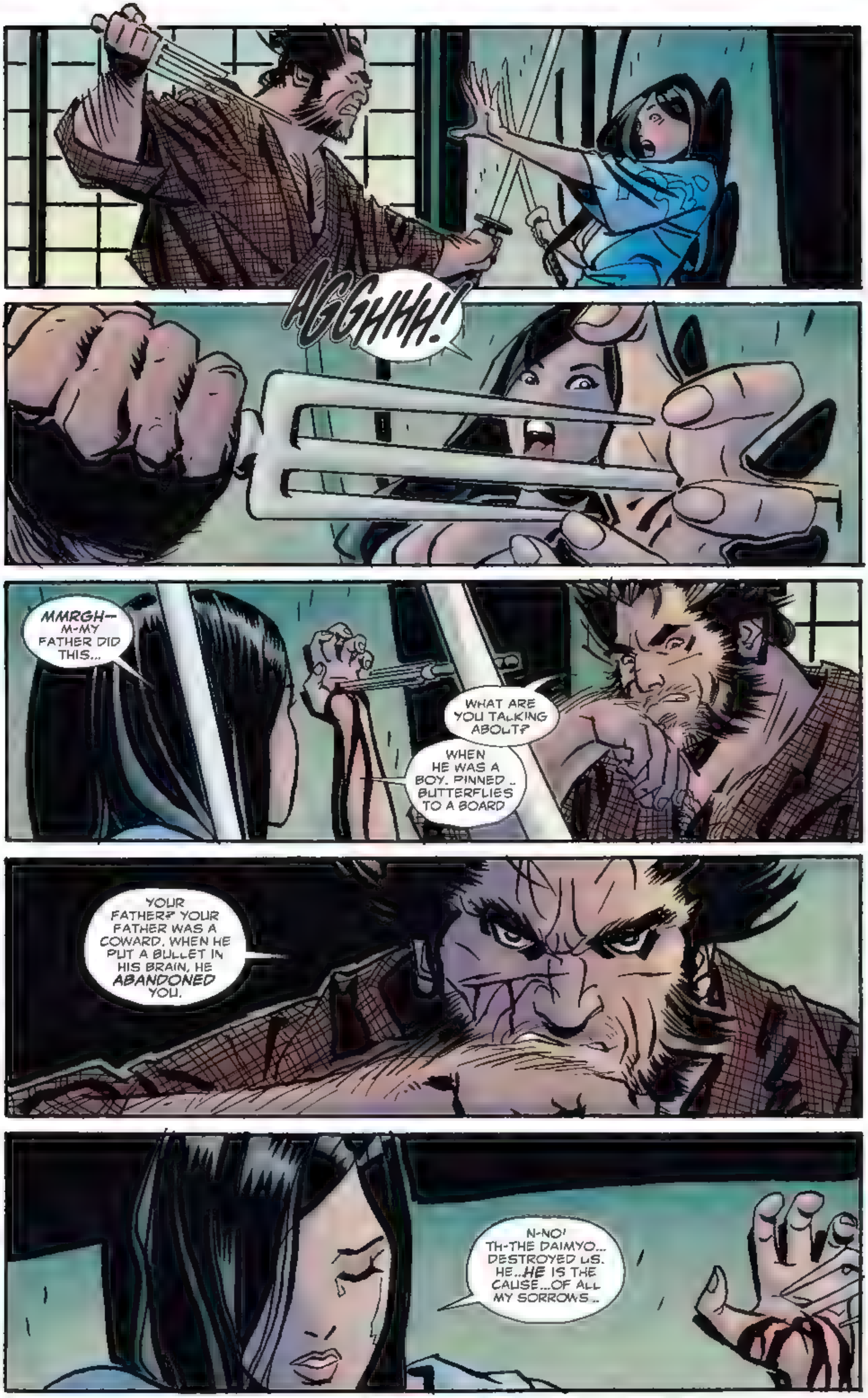

DON'T TELL ME TO CALM DOWN AND DON'T THINK YOU'D BE THE FIRST MAN I'VE KILLED IN MY BED.
WHO SENT YOU? THE DAIMYO?
NO ONE SENT ME. YOU'RE ALL WRONG ABOUT ME.
I'M NEVER WRONG ABOUT MEN.
YOU'VE NEVER MET ME BEFORE.
--!
AHH!
SNIKT
UGN!
TELL ME SOMETHING...

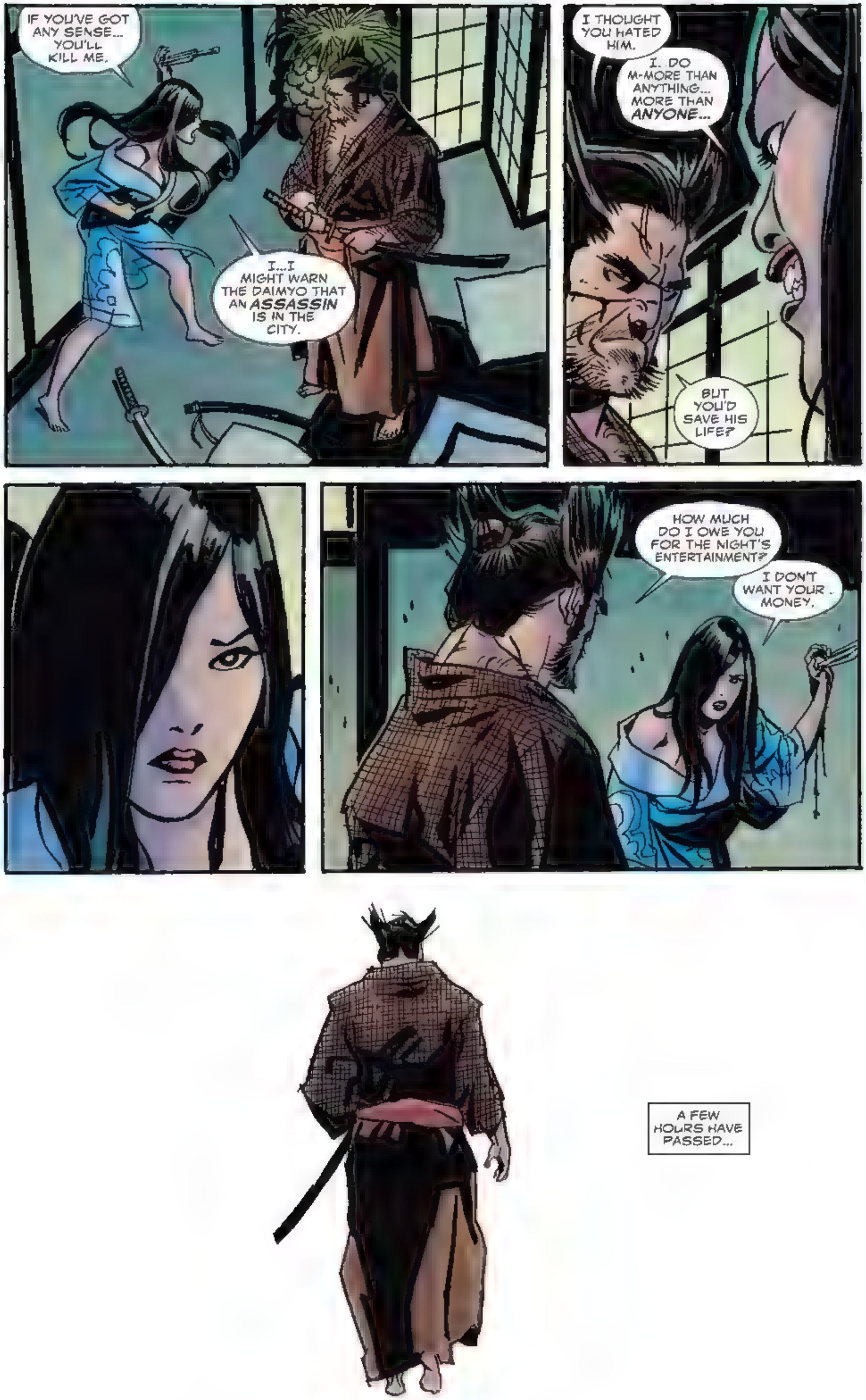

...ARE WE ACTING HERE...
...OR REALLY ENJOYING OURSELVES?
NEITHER.
UGN!
W-WAIT...
I'M...I'M NOT A SPY, OKAY? AND IF I'D WANTED TO KILL YOU...I HAD ALL NIGHT TO DO IT.
COME ON, YOU CAN'T BE RIGHT EVERY TIME
IF YOU'RE NOT A SPY... WHY ARE YOU HERE, RONIN?
WHY ARE MEN USUALLY HERE?
I KNOW WHEN A MAN IS DESPERATE OR LONELY.
YOU'RE NEITHER.

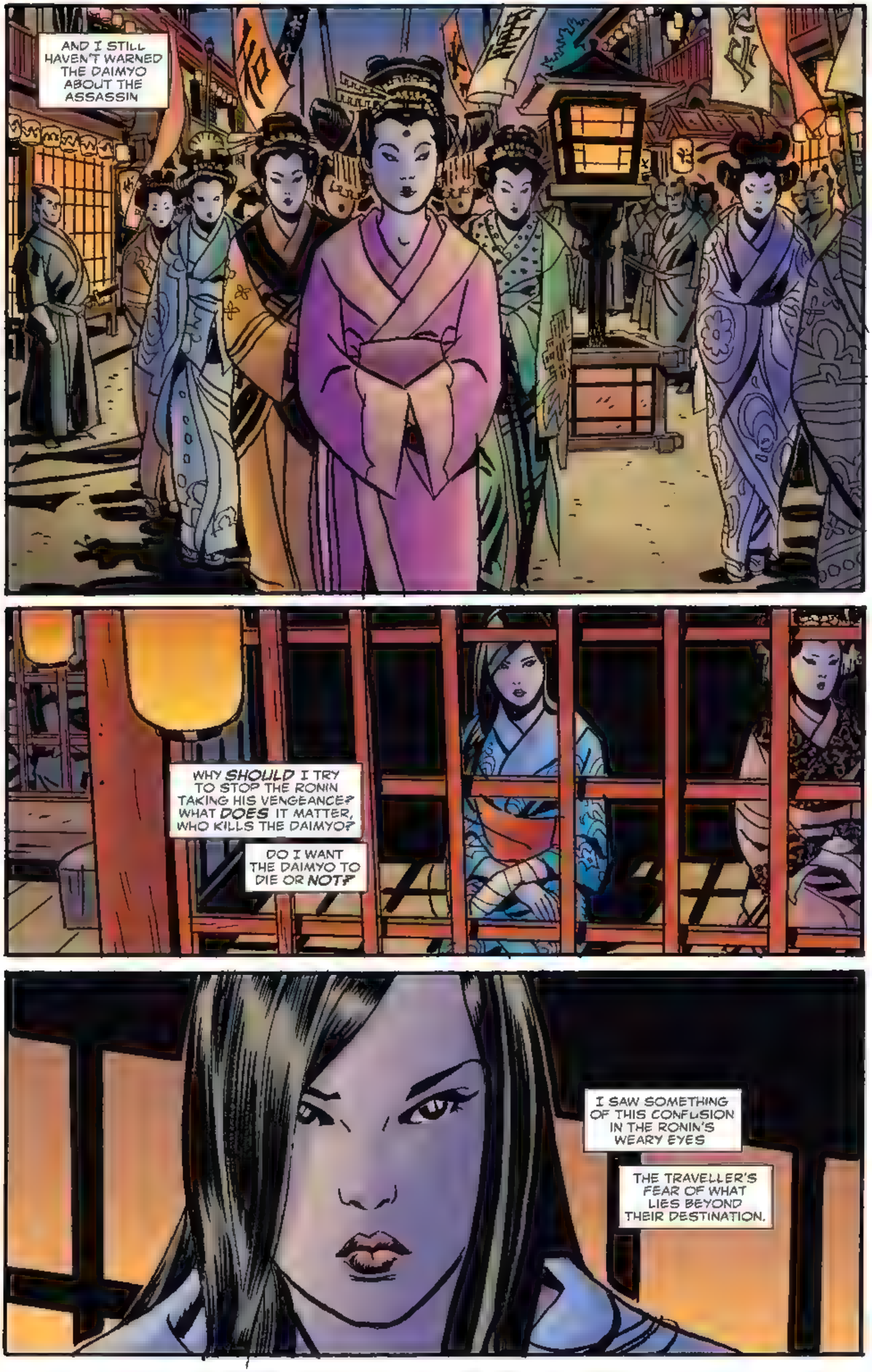

YOU MEAN TO KILL *SOMEONE* WHO?
THE MEN IN THE TEA-SHOPS SAY...THAT THE ONE NAMED BUTTERFLY KNOWS WHAT A MAN THINKS...BEFORE HE EVEN THINKS IT...
SINCE YOU CAN CLEARLY READ MY THOUGHTS, I'LL BE HONEST.
I DECIDED I'D ENJOY ONE LAST NIGHT ON EARTH...
BEFORE I KILLED SOMEONE...WHO *YOU* MUST HATE AS MUCH AS *I* DO.
WHO I MUST HATE MORE THAN ?
I DIDN'T READ YOU AS A *FOOL*.
YOU WON'T GET CLOSE TO HIM... BEFORE HIS GUARDS CUT YOU TO PIECES.
THE DAIMYO KILLED MY MASTER AT *SEKIGAHARA*.
THEN HE KILLED MY BROTHER RONINS. I AM THE LAST.
THE WORLD CHANGES. ONCE-PROUD SAMURAI WANDER THE ROADS BUT SOME THINGS REMAIN *CONSTANT*.
SACRED OATHS. *VENGEANCE*.
YOU MAY BELIEVE THIS OR NOT.
RONIN...

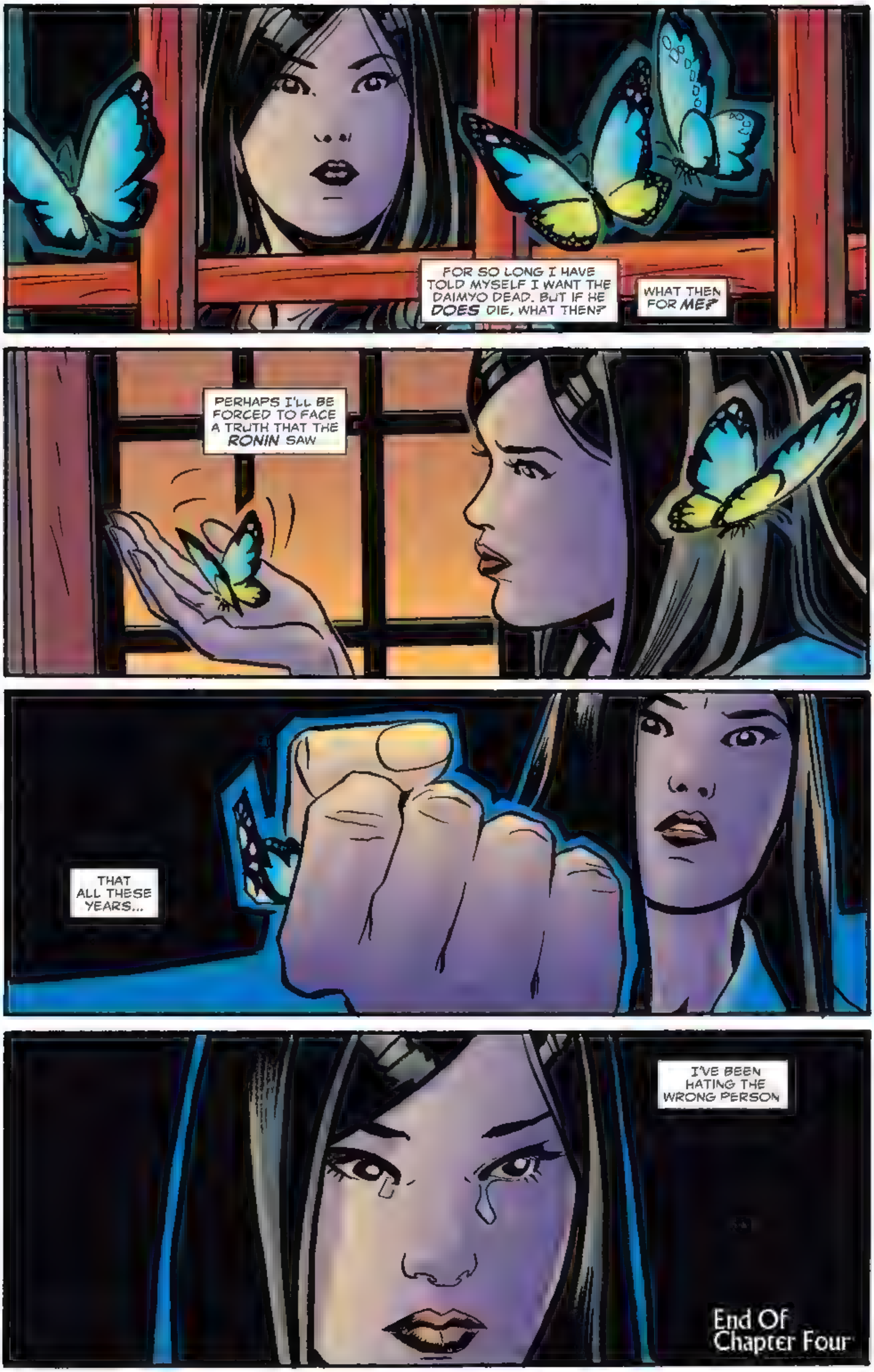

I WAS NINE YEARS OLD WHEN WE WERE FORCED OFF OUR LAND. UNABLE TO FACE BEING HOMELESS, MY FATHER SHOT HIMSELF.
MY MOTHER AND I WERE ALONE ON THE ROAD. SHE QUICKLY DIED OF HEARTBREAK AND FEVER.
BANDITS FOUND ME... SOLD ME INTO THIS PLACE.
HE IS TO BLAME FOR ALL OF MY SORROWS. *I* WILL BE THE ONE WHO KILLS HIM.
HOW DO YOU HOPE TO DO THAT?
THE DAIMYO SOMETIMES CALLS FOR GIRLS FROM *YOSHIWARA*
YOU SAID YOURSELF THAT I HAVE A ***REPUTATION***. I MUST BIDE MY TIME... UNTIL HE HEARS OF THE HALF-EUROPEAN BUTTERFLY WHOM NO MAN CAN FORGET.
ONCE I AM IN HIS BED...


WHAT DOES IT MATTER WHO KILLS HIM, AS LONG AS ONE OF US GETS THE BASTARD?
HE IS MINE.
NO ONE ELSE WILL HAVE THE SATISFACTION.
KLLNGG
IF WE DON'T STOP THIS... WE'RE GOING TO KILL EACH OTHER.
IT'S TOO LATE TO STOP.
YOU SAID YOURSELF, I PROBABLY WON'T EVEN GET CLOSE TO HIM.
YOU MIGHT GET LUCKY.
ARGHH!
KLLINNG
ENOUGH!


AGGHHH!
MMRGH— M-MY FATHER DID THIS...
WHAT ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT?
WHEN HE WAS A BOY. PINNED .. BUTTERFLIES TO A BOARD
YOUR FATHER? YOUR FATHER WAS A COWARD. WHEN HE PUT A BULLET IN HIS BRAIN, HE *ABANDONED* YOU.
N-NO! TH-THE DAIMYO... DESTROYED US. HE...*HE* IS THE CAUSE...OF ALL MY SORROWS...


IF YOU'VE GOT ANY SENSE... YOU'LL KILL ME.
I...I MIGHT WARN THE DAIMYO THAT AN *ASSASSIN* IS IN THE CITY.
I THOUGHT YOU HATED HIM.
I.. DO M-MORE THAN ANYTHING... MORE THAN *ANYONE*...
BUT YOU'D SAVE HIS LIFE?
HOW MUCH DO I OWE YOU FOR THE NIGHT'S ENTERTAINMENT?
I DON'T WANT YOUR .. MONEY.
A FEW HOURS HAVE PASSED...


AND I STILL HAVEN'T WARNED THE DAIMYO ABOUT THE ASSASSIN
WHY *SHOULD* I TRY TO STOP THE RONIN TAKING HIS VENGEANCE? WHAT *DOES* IT MATTER, WHO KILLS THE DAIMYO?
DO I WANT THE DAIMYO TO DIE OR *NOT?*
I SAW SOMETHING OF THIS CONFUSION IN THE RONIN'S WEARY EYES
THE TRAVELLER'S FEAR OF WHAT LIES BEYOND THEIR DESTINATION.


FOR SO LONG I HAVE TOLD MYSELF I WANT THE DAIMYO DEAD. BUT IF HE *DOES* DIE, WHAT THEN?
WHAT THEN FOR *ME?*
PERHAPS I'LL BE FORCED TO FACE A TRUTH THAT THE *RONIN* SAW
THAT ALL THESE YEARS...
I'VE BEEN HATING THE WRONG PERSON
End Of Chapter Four

RONIN
浪人

Chapter Four: The Way Of The Butterfly

Writer:
Peter Milligan

Art:
Goran Parlov

Color Art:
Lee Loughridge

Letters:
VC's Joe Caramagna

Cover:
David Aja

Variant Cover:
David Mack

Editor:
Sebastian Girner

Editor in Chief:
Axel Alonso

Chief Creative Officer:
Joe Quesada

Publisher:
Dan Buckley

Exec. Producer:
Alan Fine

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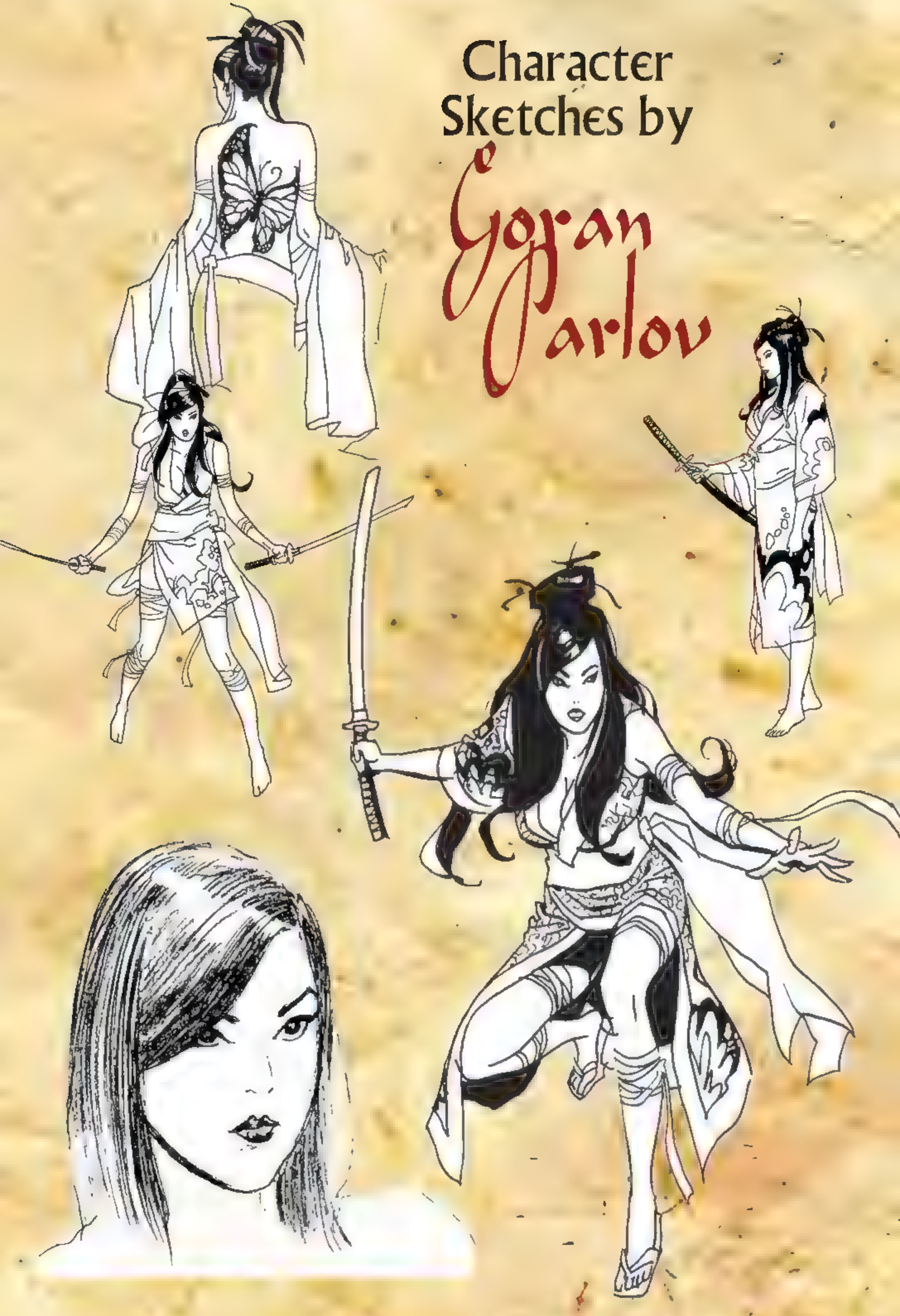
Character Sketches by Goran Parlov



NEXT WEEK: DEADPOOL!

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5 RONIN #5

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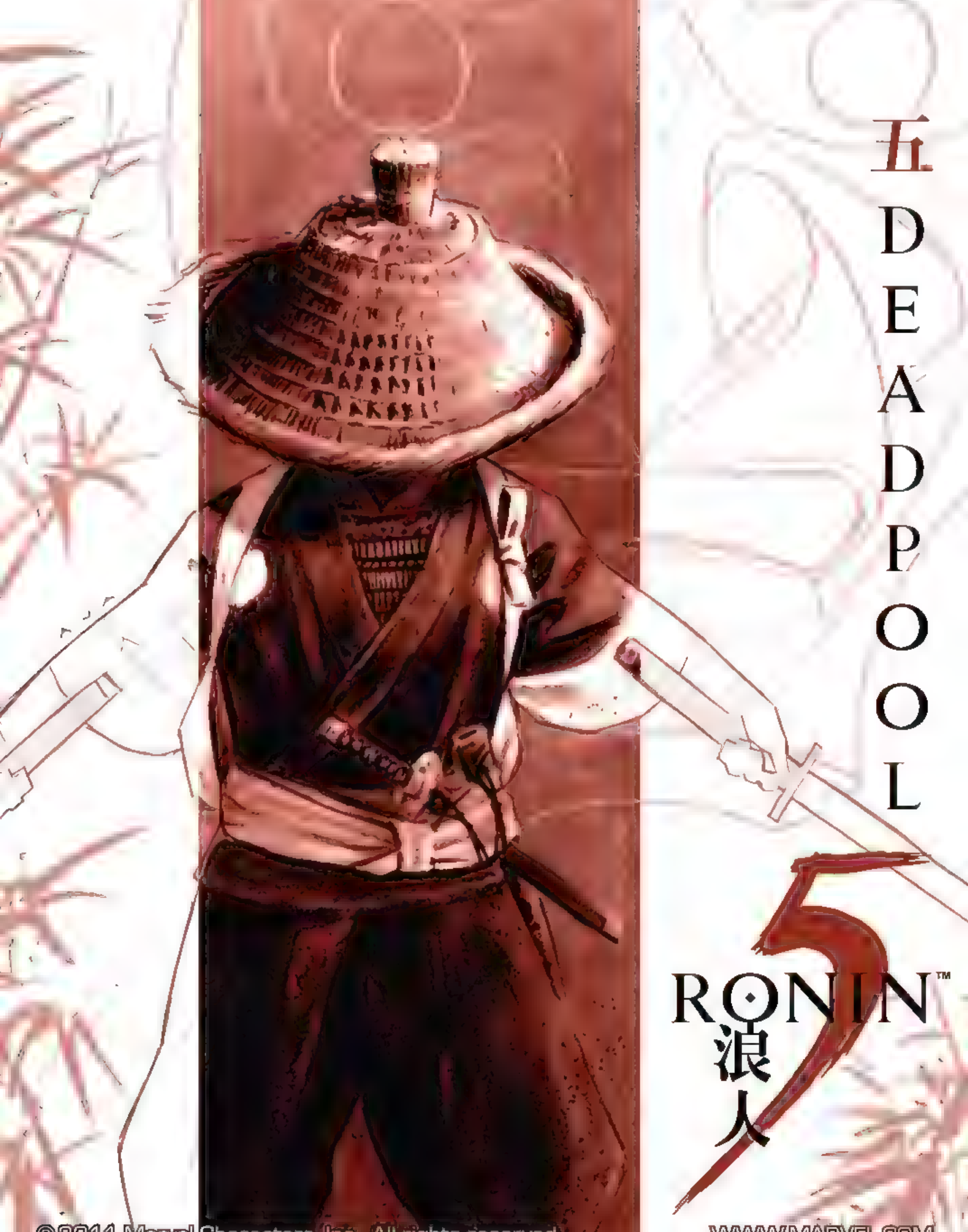
MILLIGAN
FERNANDEZ
LOUGHRIDGE

"OH, IT HAD
THE SHAPE OF A MAN.
BUT IT WASN'T A MAN.
NOT ANYMORE..."

五 DEADPOOL

5 RONIN™ 浪人



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5 RONIN 浪人

Chapter Five: The Way Of The Fool

Writer:
Peter Milligan

Art:
Leandro Fernandez

Color Art:
Lee Loughridge

Letters:
VC's Joe Caramagna

Cover:
David Aja

Variant Cover:
Ed McGuinness and Morry Hollowell

Editor:
Sebastian Girner

Editor in Chief:
Axel Alonso

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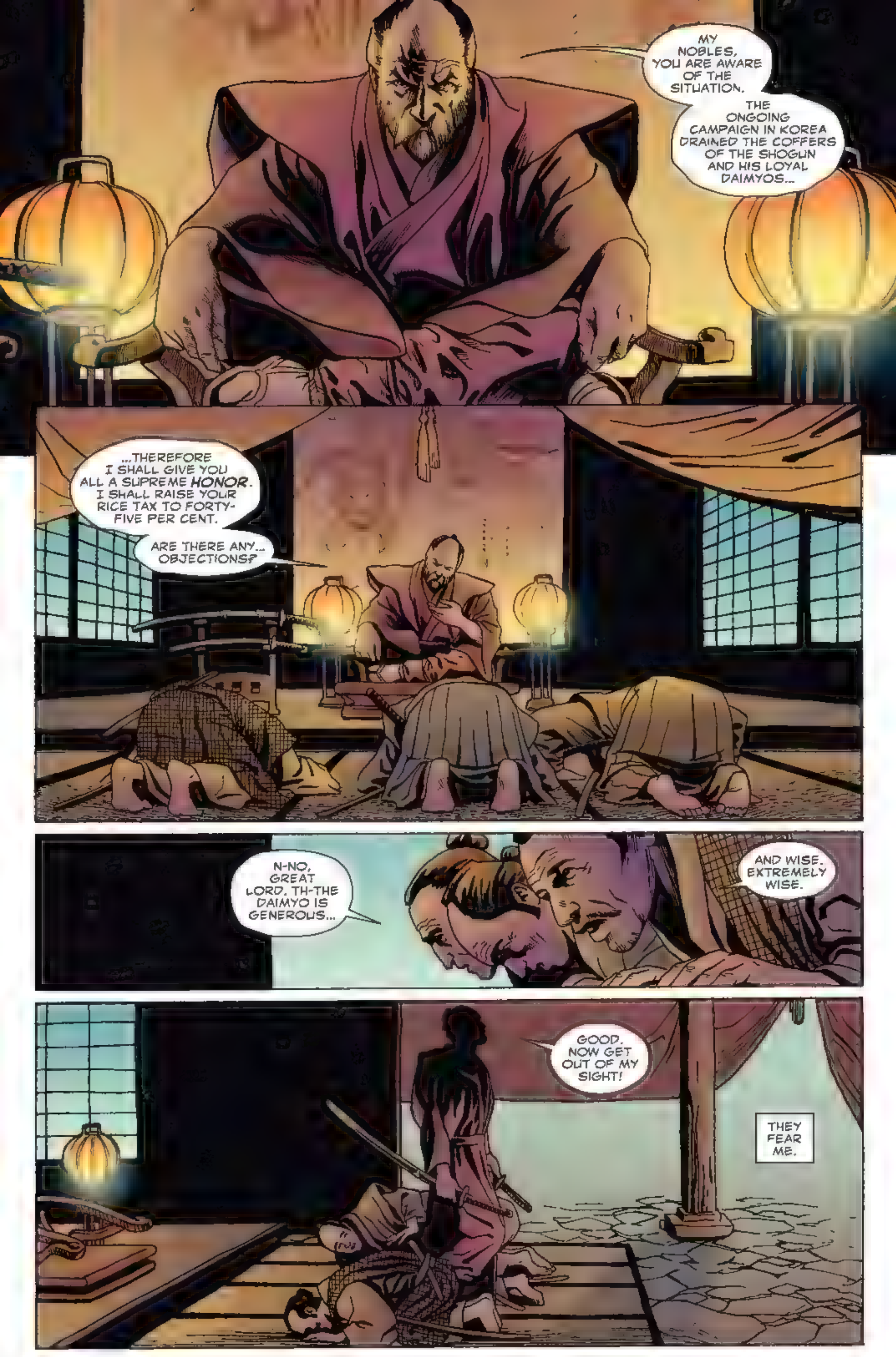
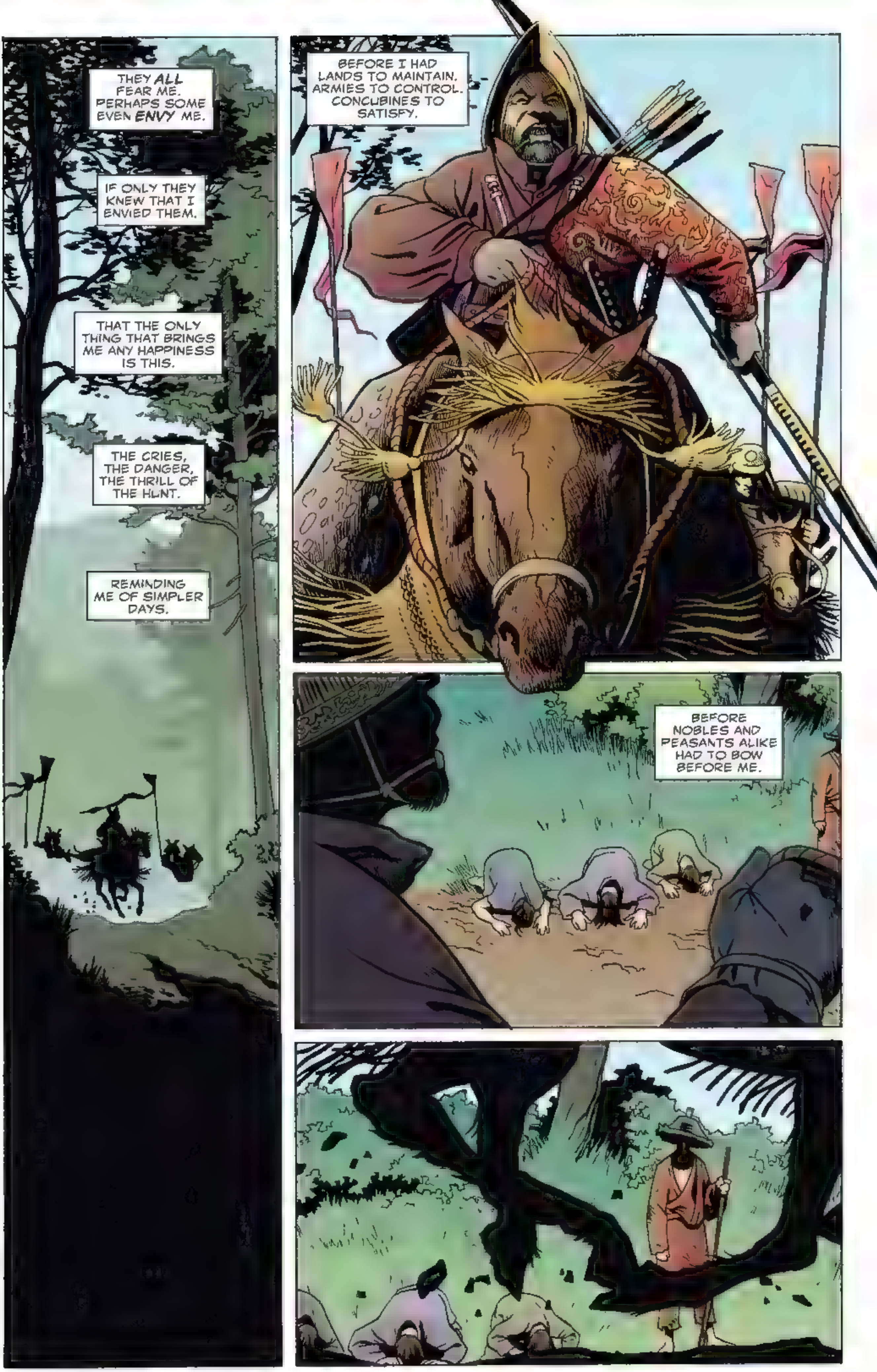
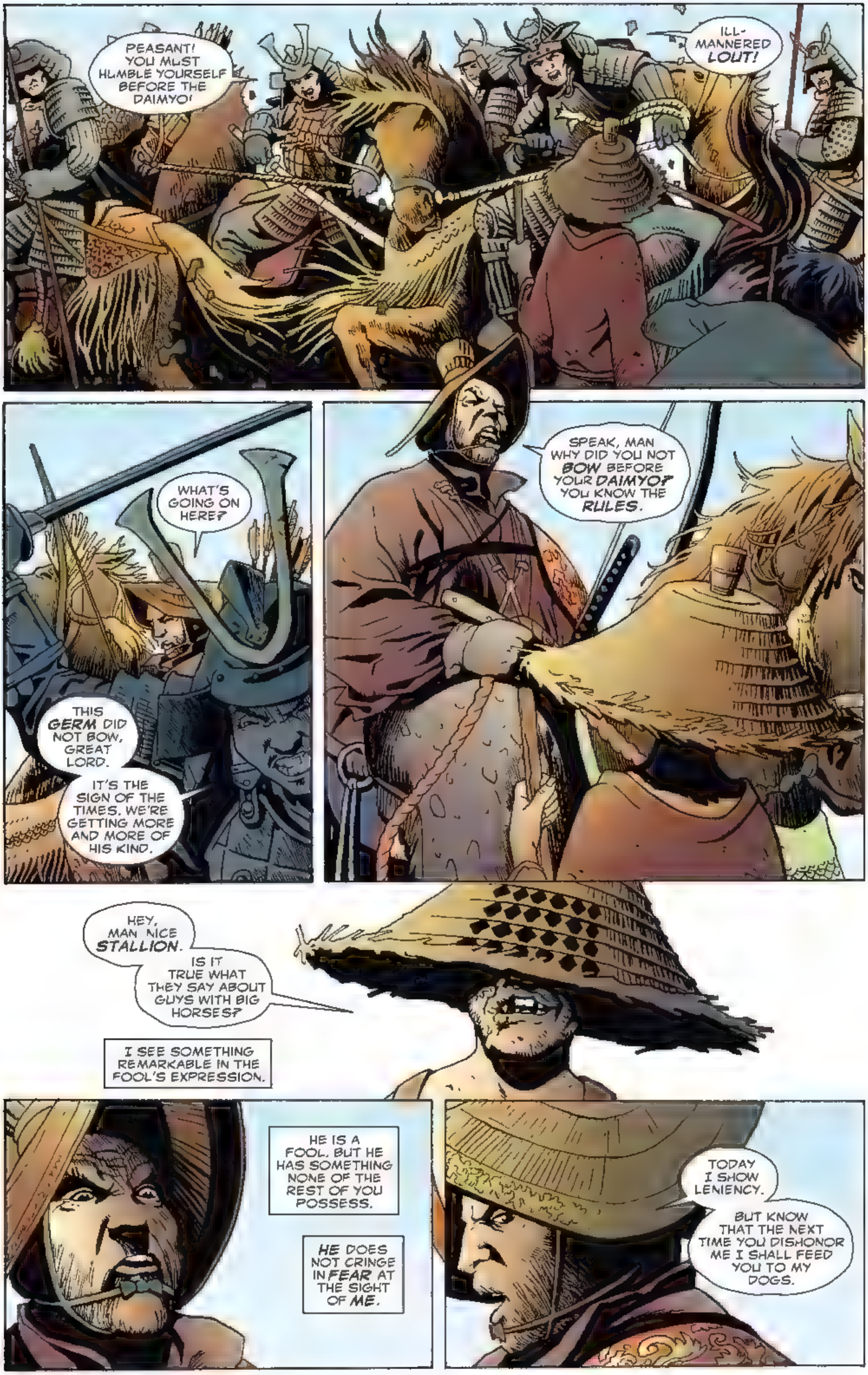
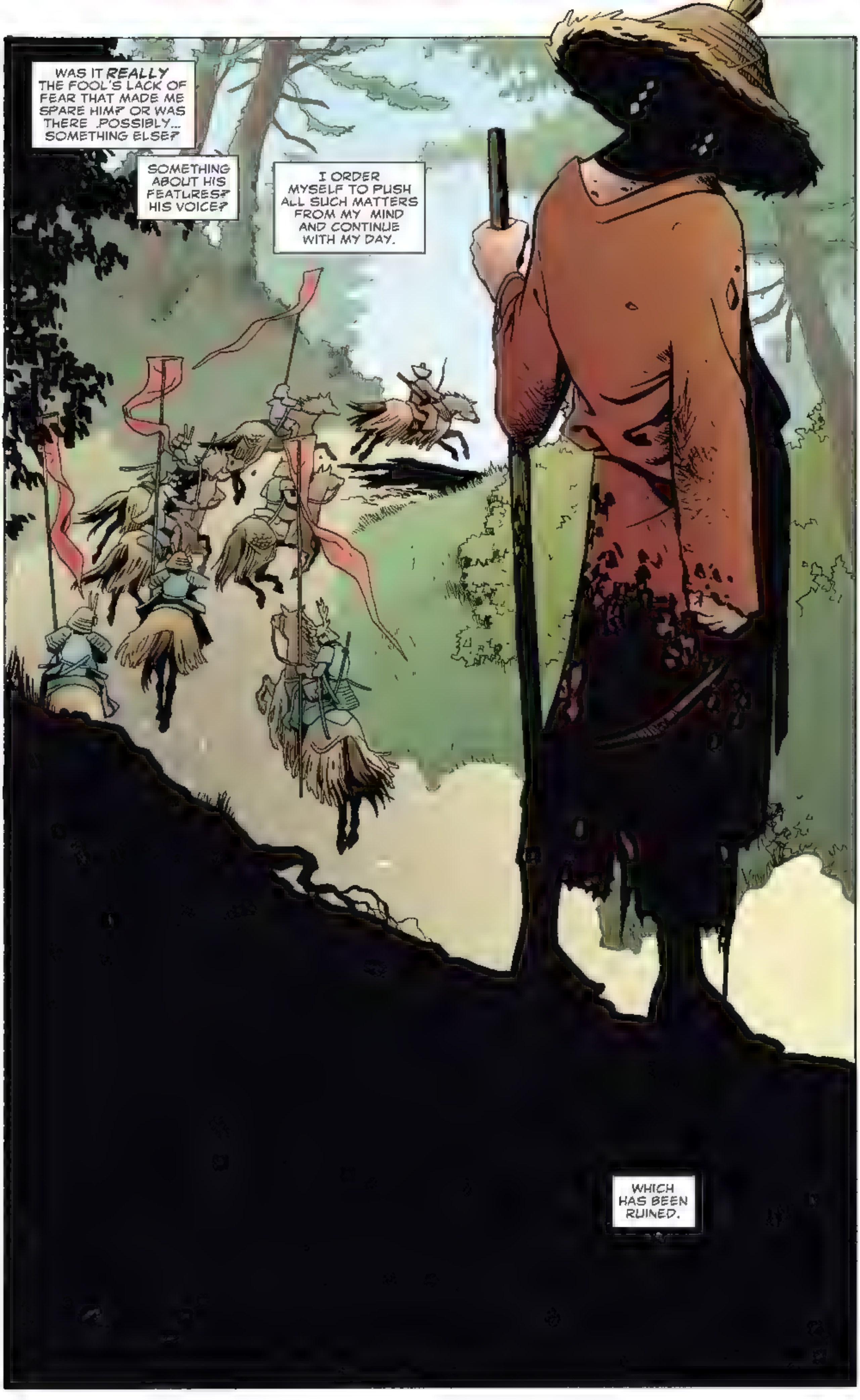
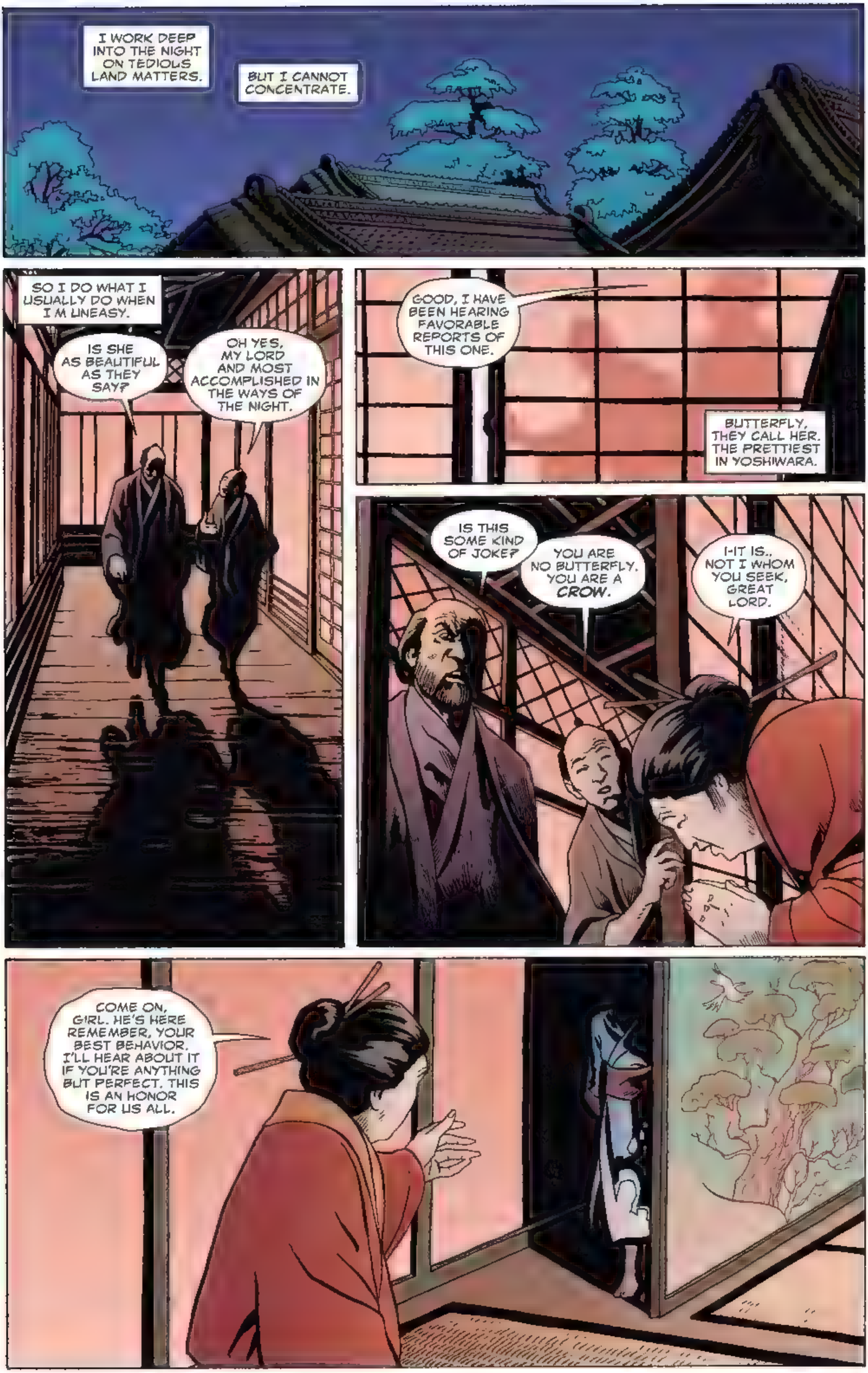
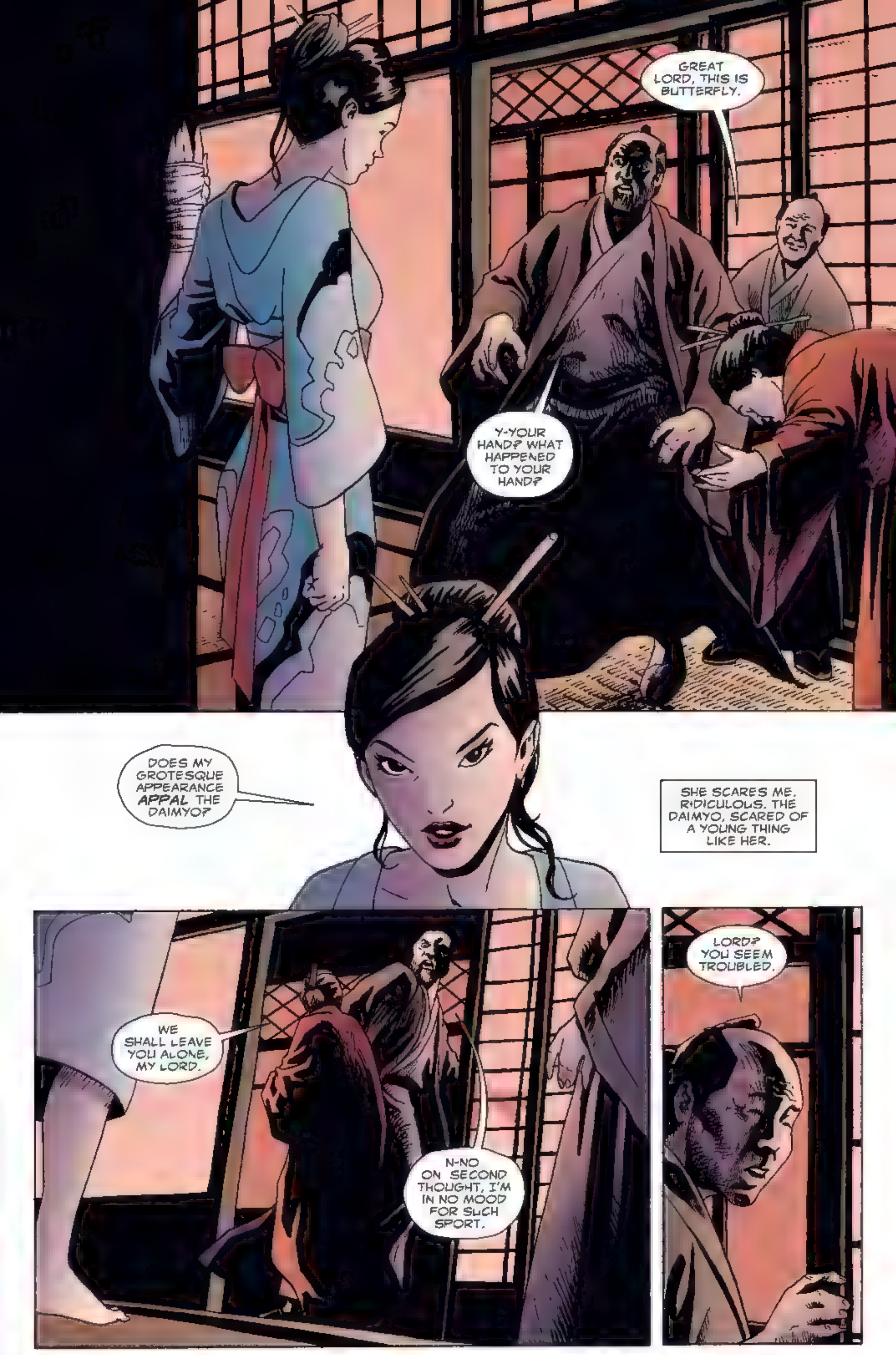

MY NOBLES, YOU ARE AWARE OF THE SITUATION.
THE ONGOING CAMPAIGN IN KOREA DRAINED THE COFFERS OF THE SHOGUN AND HIS LOYAL DAIMYOS...
...THEREFORE I SHALL GIVE YOU ALL A SUPREME **HONOR**. I SHALL RAISE YOUR RICE TAX TO FORTY-FIVE PER CENT.
ARE THERE ANY... OBJECTIONS?
N-NO, GREAT LORD. TH-THE DAIMYO IS GENEROUS...
AND WISE. EXTREMELY WISE.
GOOD. NOW GET OUT OF MY SIGHT!
THEY FEAR ME.

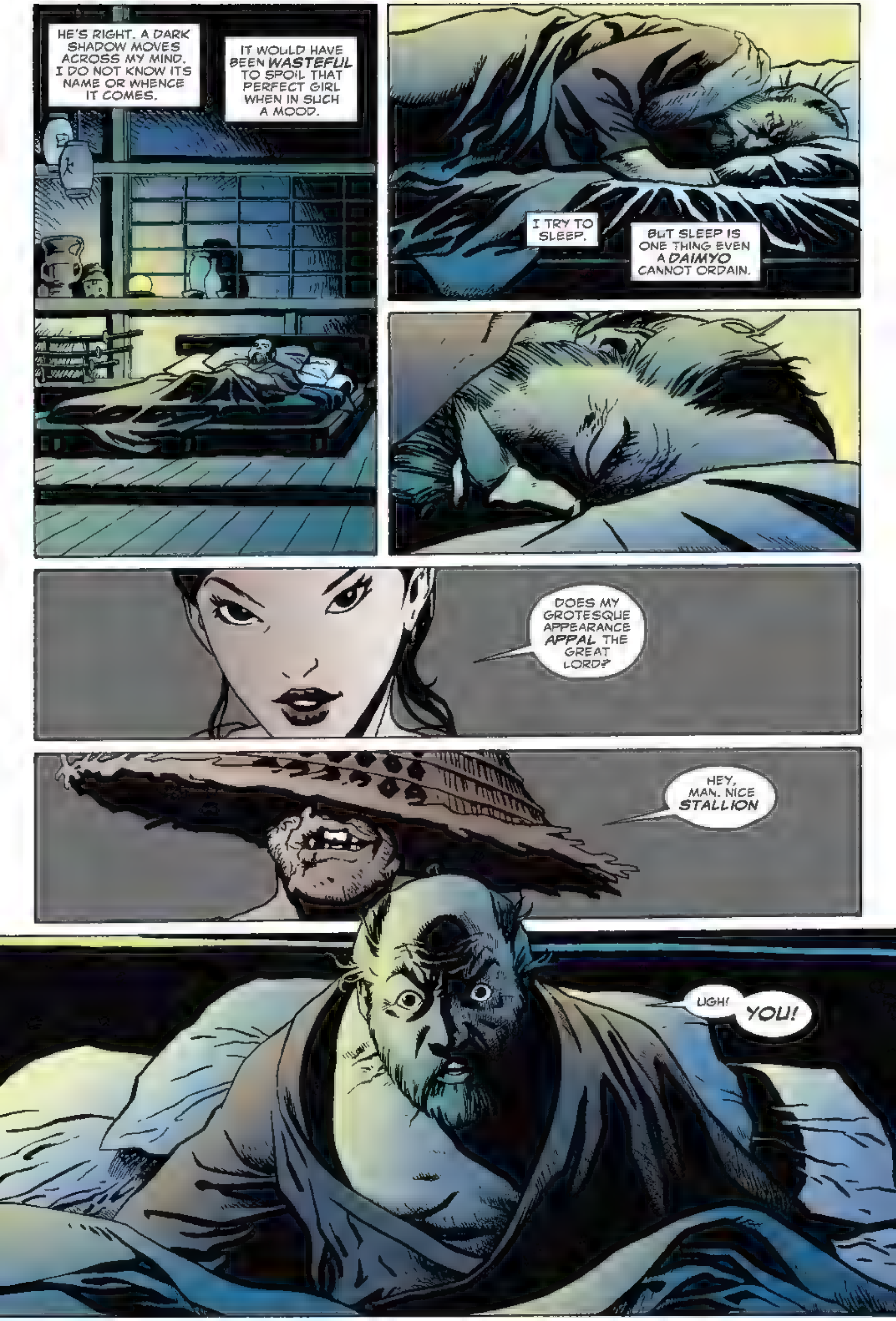

THEY *ALL* FEAR ME. PERHAPS SOME EVEN *ENVY* ME.
IF ONLY THEY KNEW THAT I ENVIED THEM.
THAT THE ONLY THING THAT BRINGS ME ANY HAPPINESS IS THIS.
THE CRIES, THE DANGER, THE THRILL OF THE HUNT.
REMINDING ME OF SIMPLER DAYS.
BEFORE I HAD LANDS TO MAINTAIN, ARMIES TO CONTROL, CONCUBINES TO SATISFY.
BEFORE NOBLES AND PEASANTS ALIKE HAD TO BOW BEFORE ME.

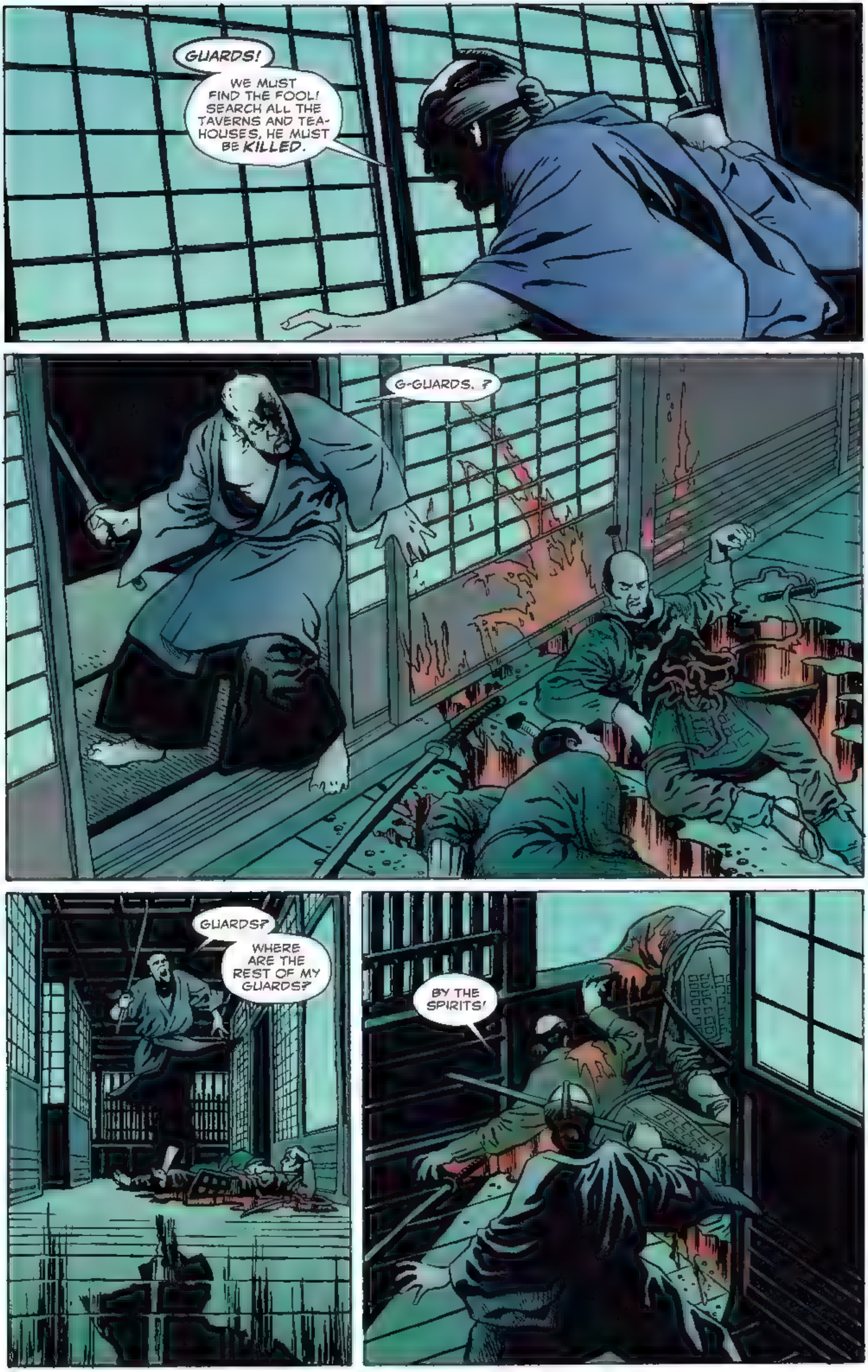

PEASANT! YOU MUST HUMBLE YOURSELF BEFORE THE DAIMYO!
ILL-MANNERED LOUT!
WHAT'S GOING ON HERE?
THIS GERM DID NOT BOW, GREAT LORD.
IT'S THE SIGN OF THE TIMES. WE'RE GETTING MORE AND MORE OF HIS KIND.
SPEAK, MAN WHY DID YOU NOT BOW BEFORE YOUR DAIMYO? YOU KNOW THE RULES.
HEY, MAN NICE STALLION.
IS IT TRUE WHAT THEY SAY ABOUT GUYS WITH BIG HORSES?
I SEE SOMETHING REMARKABLE IN THE FOOL'S EXPRESSION.
HE IS A FOOL. BUT HE HAS SOMETHING NONE OF THE REST OF YOU POSSESS.
HE DOES NOT CRINGE IN FEAR AT THE SIGHT OF ME.
TODAY I SHOW LENIENCY.
BUT KNOW THAT THE NEXT TIME YOU DISHONOR ME I SHALL FEED YOU TO MY DOGS.

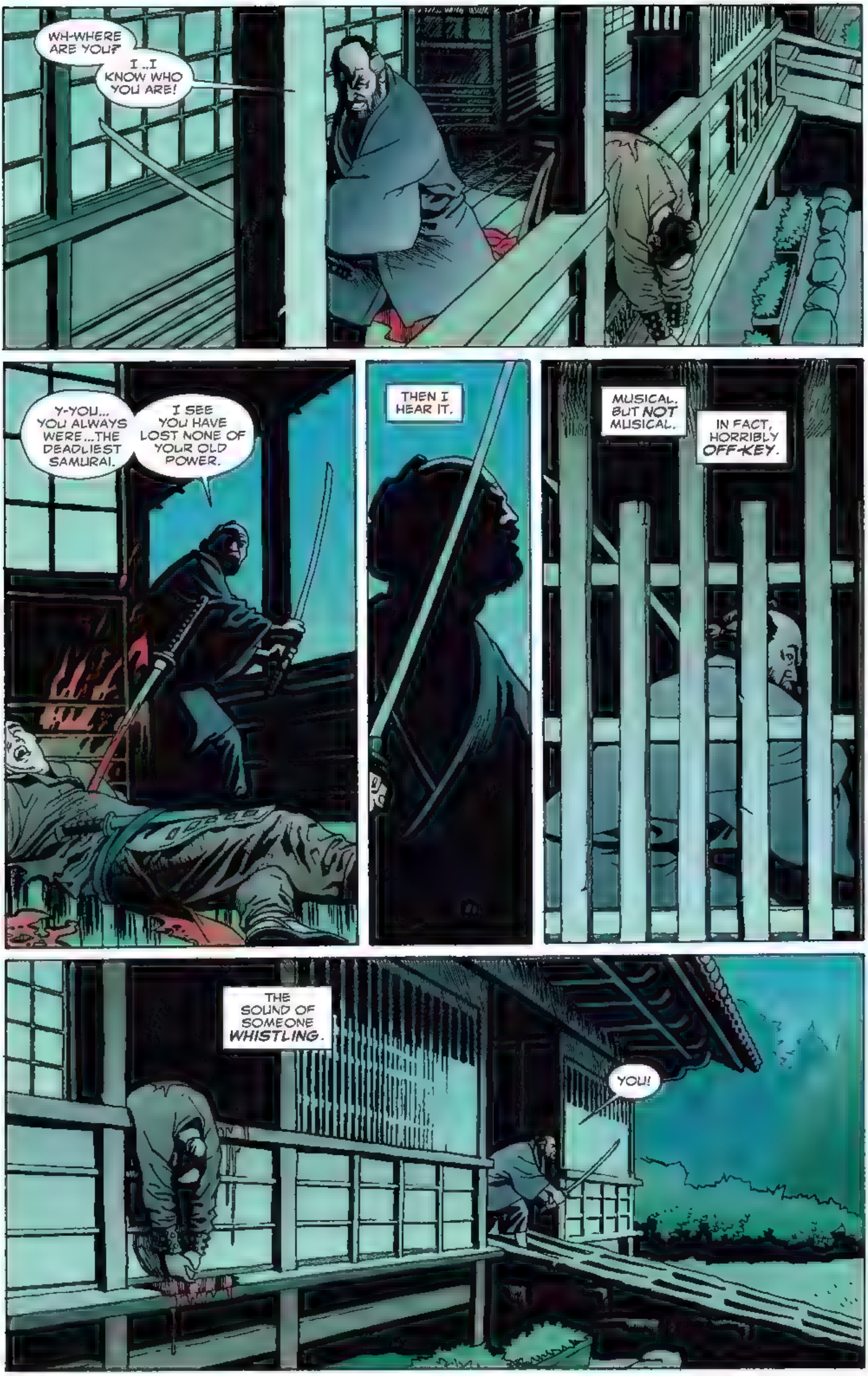

WAS IT *REALLY* THE FOOL'S LACK OF FEAR THAT MADE ME SPARE HIM? OR WAS THERE POSSIBLY... SOMETHING ELSE?
SOMETHING ABOUT HIS FEATURES? HIS VOICE?
I ORDER MYSELF TO PUSH ALL SUCH MATTERS FROM MY MIND AND CONTINUE WITH MY DAY.
WHICH HAS BEEN RUINED.

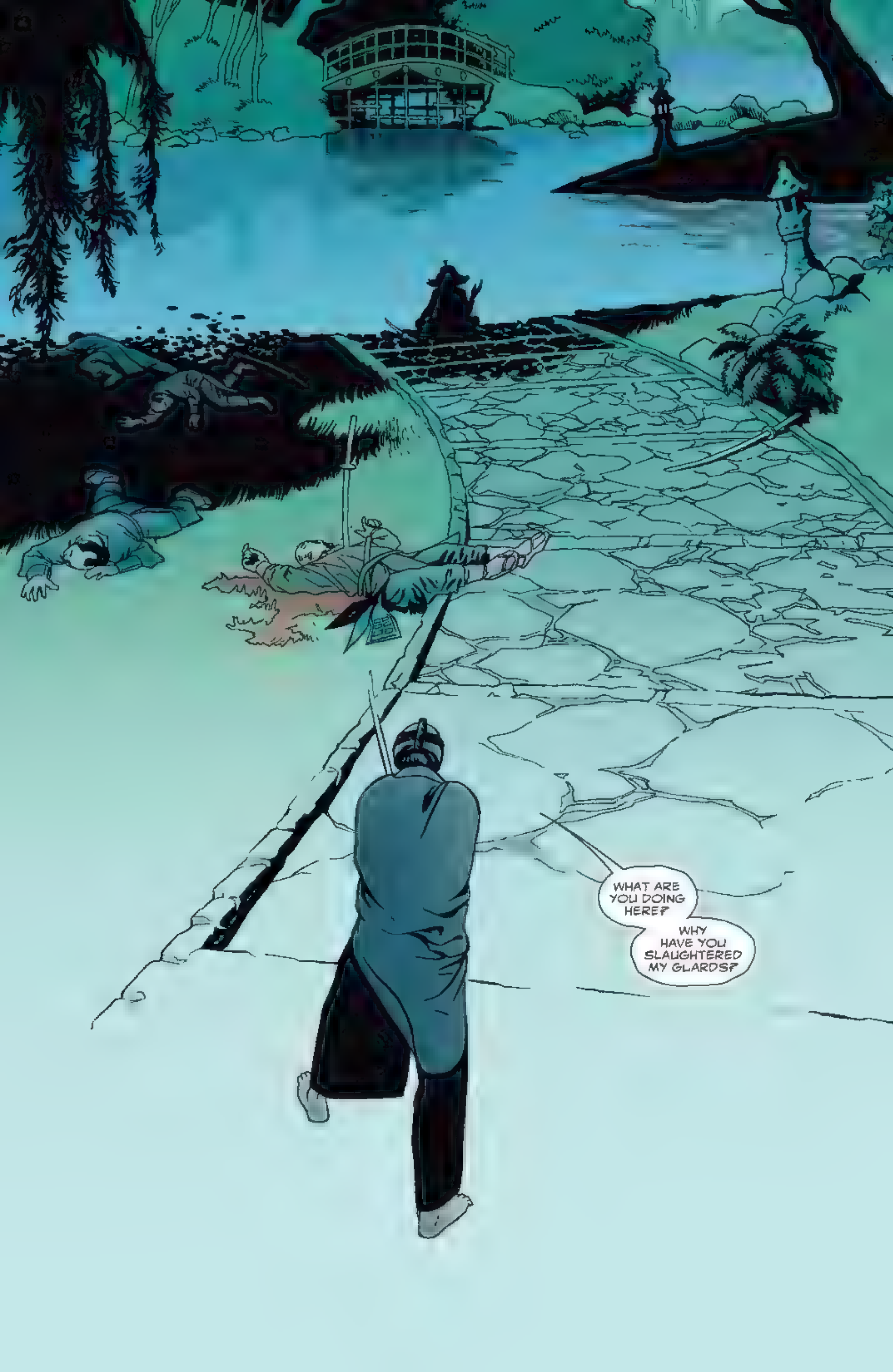

I WORK DEEP INTO THE NIGHT ON TEDIOUS LAND MATTERS.
BUT I CANNOT CONCENTRATE.
SO I DO WHAT I USUALLY DO WHEN I'M UNEASY.
IS SHE AS BEAUTIFUL AS THEY SAY?
OH YES, MY LORD AND MOST ACCOMPLISHED IN THE WAYS OF THE NIGHT.
GOOD, I HAVE BEEN HEARING FAVORABLE REPORTS OF THIS ONE.
BUTTERFLY, THEY CALL HER. THE PRETTIEST IN YOSHIWARA.
IS THIS SOME KIND OF JOKE?
YOU ARE NO BUTTERFLY. YOU ARE A *CROW*.
I-IT IS.. NOT I WHOM YOU SEEK, GREAT LORD.
COME ON, GIRL. HE'S HERE REMEMBER, YOUR BEST BEHAVIOR. I'LL HEAR ABOUT IT IF YOU'RE ANYTHING BUT PERFECT. THIS IS AN HONOR FOR US ALL.

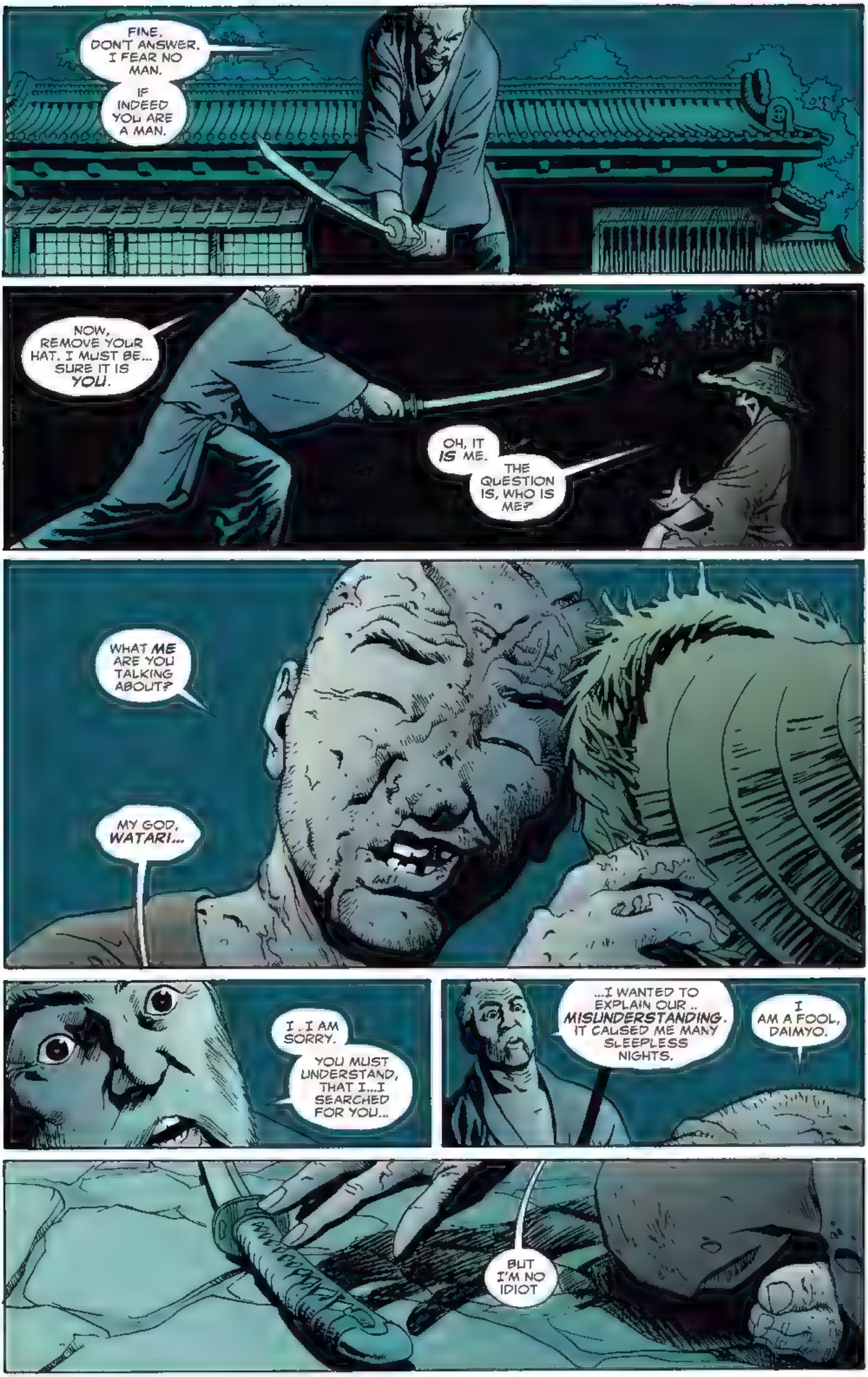

GREAT LORD, THIS IS BUTTERFLY.
Y-YOUR HAND? WHAT HAPPENED TO YOUR HAND?
DOES MY GROTESQUE APPEARANCE *APPAL* THE DAIMYO?
SHE SCARES ME. RIDICULOUS. THE DAIMYO, SCARED OF A YOUNG THING LIKE HER.
WE SHALL LEAVE YOU ALONE, MY LORD.
N-NO ON SECOND THOUGHT, I'M IN NO MOOD FOR SUCH SPORT.
LORD? YOU SEEM TROUBLED.

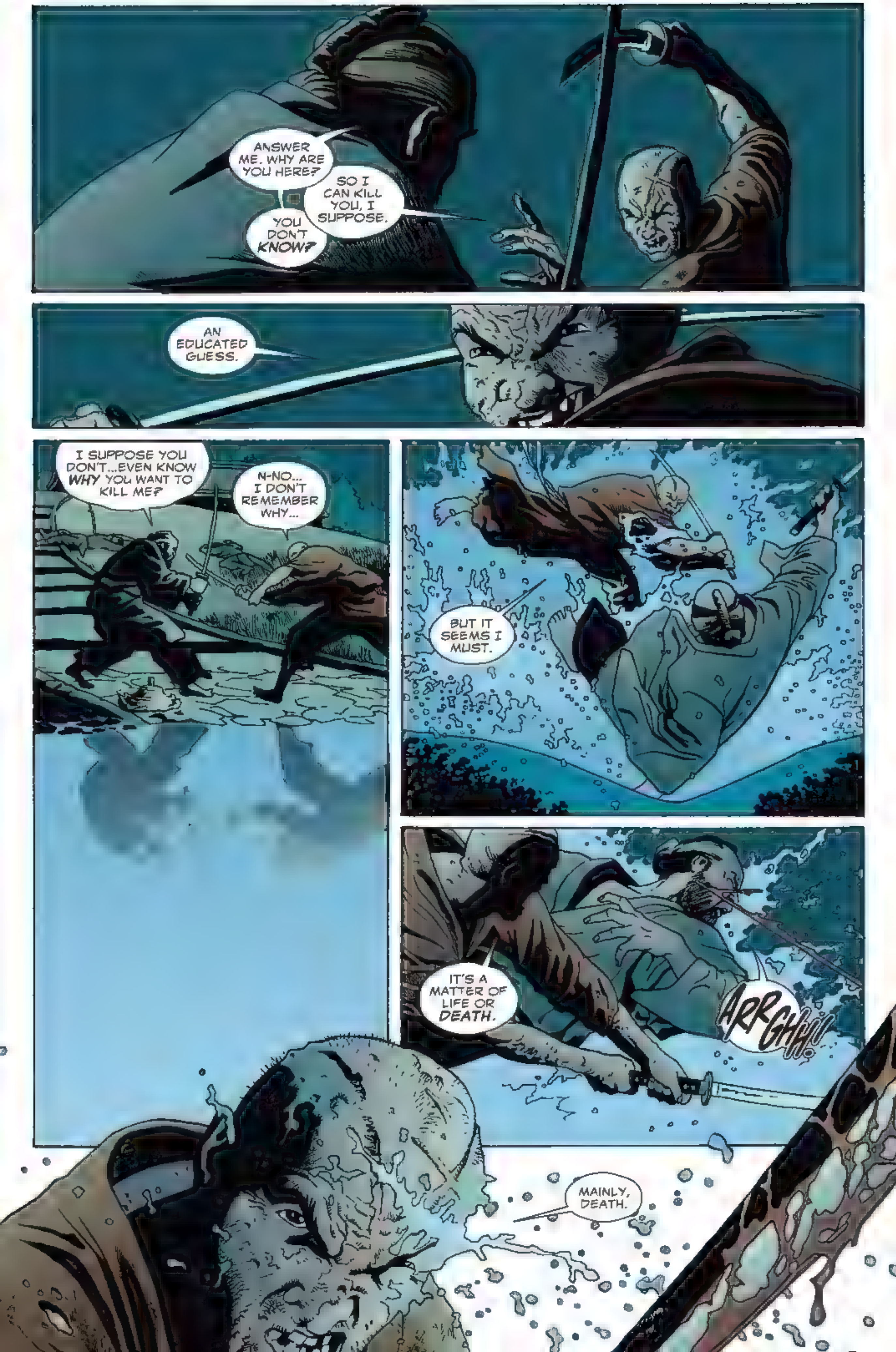

HE'S RIGHT. A DARK SHADOW MOVES ACROSS MY MIND. I DO NOT KNOW ITS NAME OR WHENCE IT COMES.
IT WOULD HAVE BEEN **WASTEFUL** TO SPOIL THAT PERFECT GIRL WHEN IN SUCH A MOOD.
I TRY TO SLEEP.
BUT SLEEP IS ONE THING EVEN A ***DAIMYO*** CANNOT ORDAIN.
DOES MY GROTESQUE APPEARANCE ***APPAL*** THE GREAT LORD?
HEY, MAN. NICE ***STALLION***
UGH!
YOU!

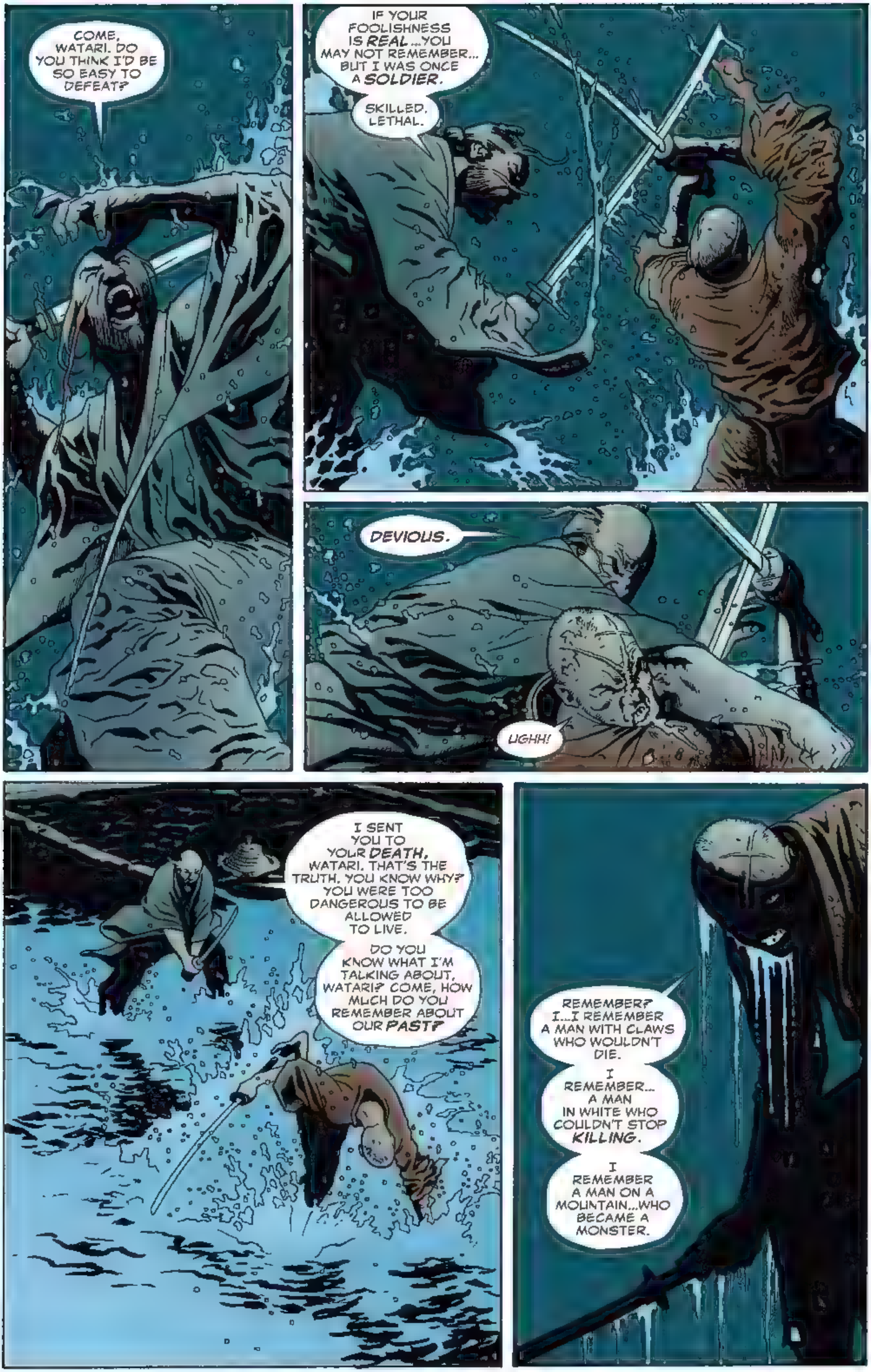

GUARDS!
WE MUST FIND THE FOOL! SEARCH ALL THE TAVERNS AND TEA-HOUSES, HE MUST BE *KILLED*.
G-GUARDS. ?
GUARDS?
WHERE ARE THE REST OF MY GUARDS?
BY THE SPIRITS!

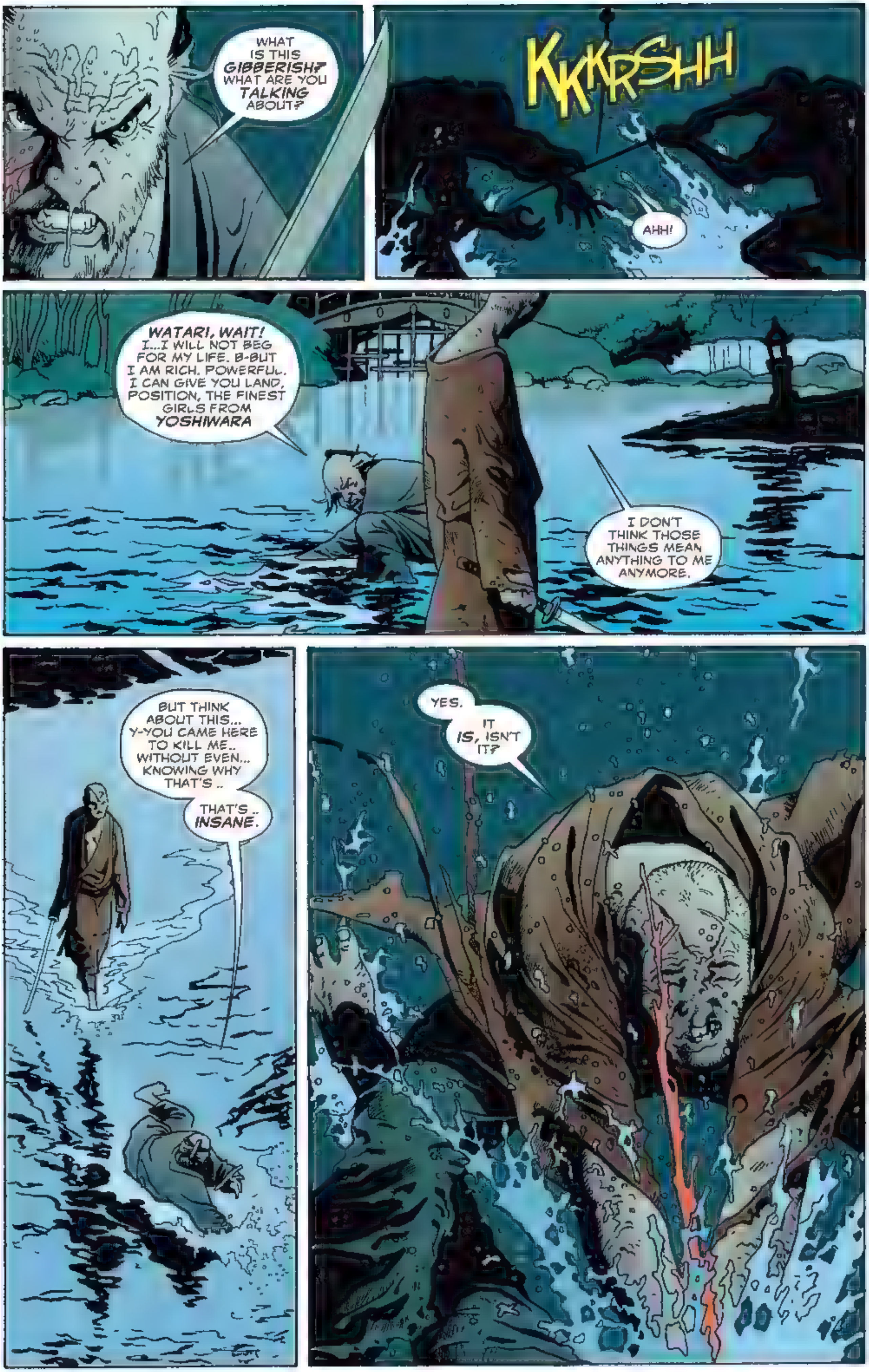

WH-WHERE ARE YOU?
I ..I KNOW WHO YOU ARE!
Y-YOU... YOU ALWAYS WERE...THE DEADLIEST SAMURAI.
I SEE YOU HAVE LOST NONE OF YOUR OLD POWER.
THEN I HEAR IT.
MUSICAL. BUT NOT MUSICAL.
IN FACT, HORRIBLY OFF-KEY.
THE SOUND OF SOMEONE WHISTLING.
YOU!

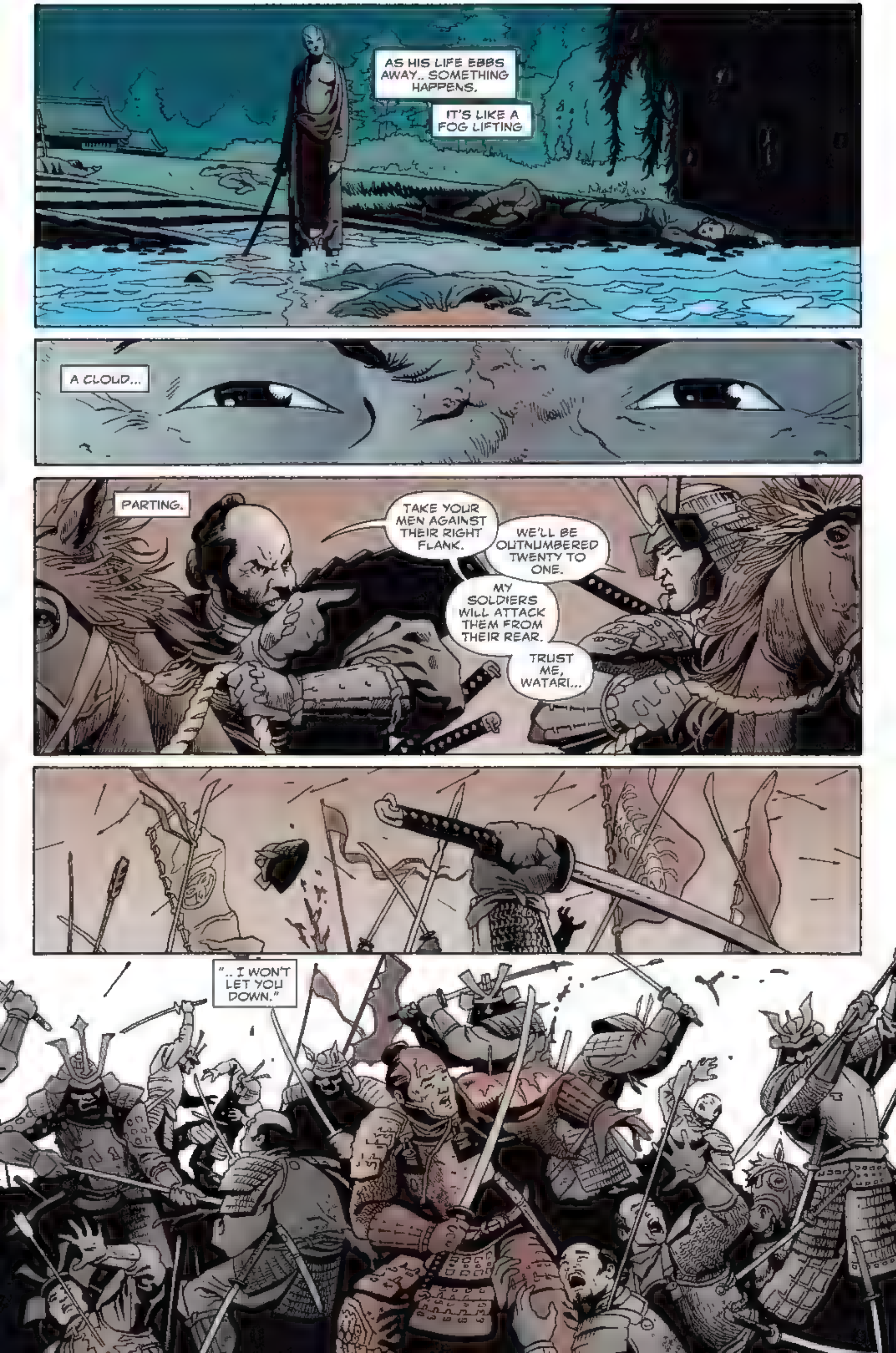

WHAT ARE YOU DOING HERE?
WHY HAVE YOU SLAUGHTERED MY GUARDS?

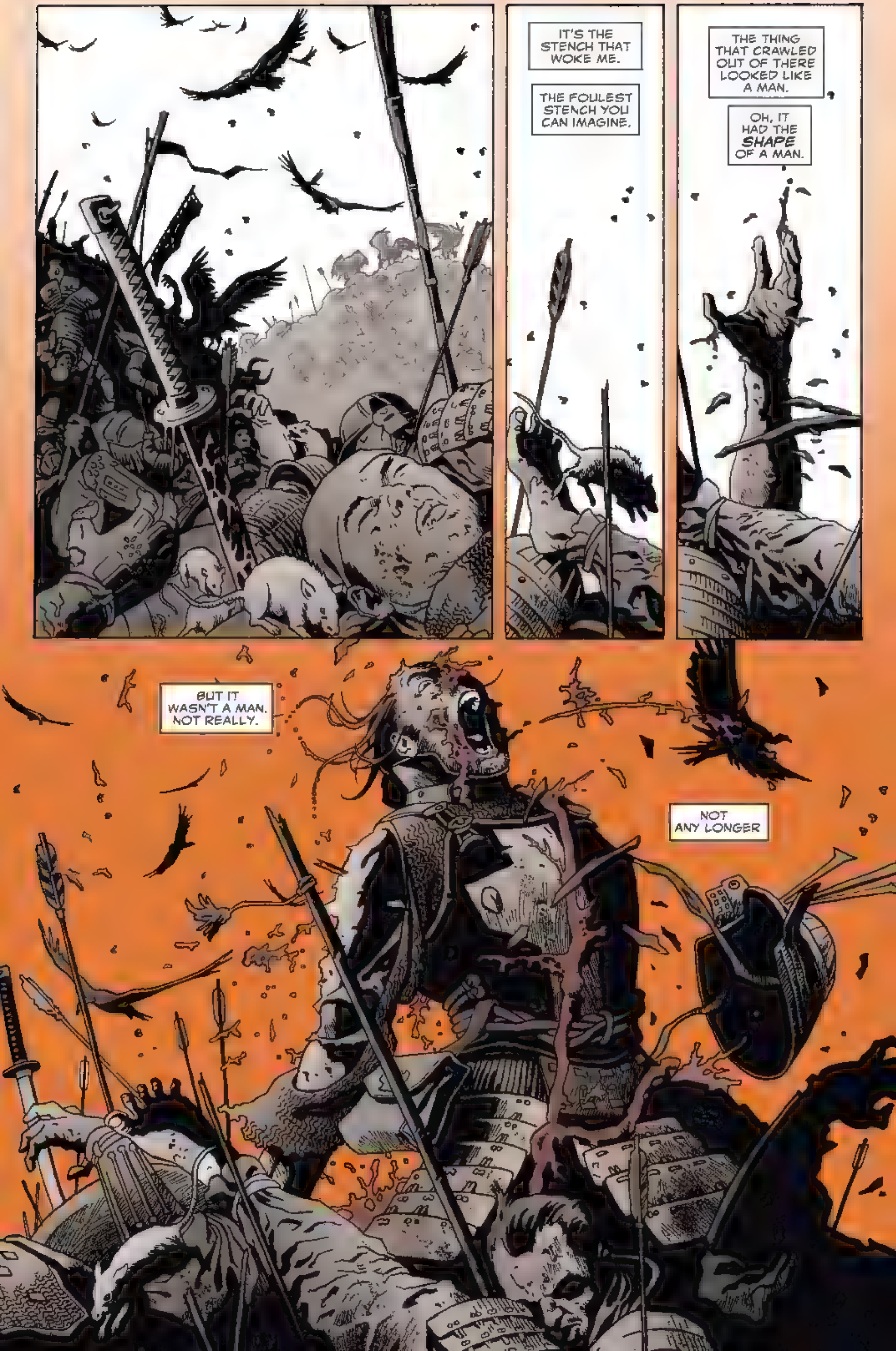

FINE. DON'T ANSWER. I FEAR NO MAN.
IF INDEED YOU ARE A MAN.
NOW, REMOVE YOUR HAT. I MUST BE... SURE IT IS *YOU*.
OH, IT *IS* ME.
THE QUESTION IS, WHO IS ME?
WHAT *ME* ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT?
MY GOD, *WATARI*...
I..I AM SORRY.
YOU MUST UNDERSTAND, THAT I...I SEARCHED FOR YOU...
...I WANTED TO EXPLAIN OUR.. *MISUNDERSTANDING*. IT CAUSED ME MANY SLEEPLESS NIGHTS.
I AM A FOOL, DAIMYO.
BUT I'M NO IDIOT

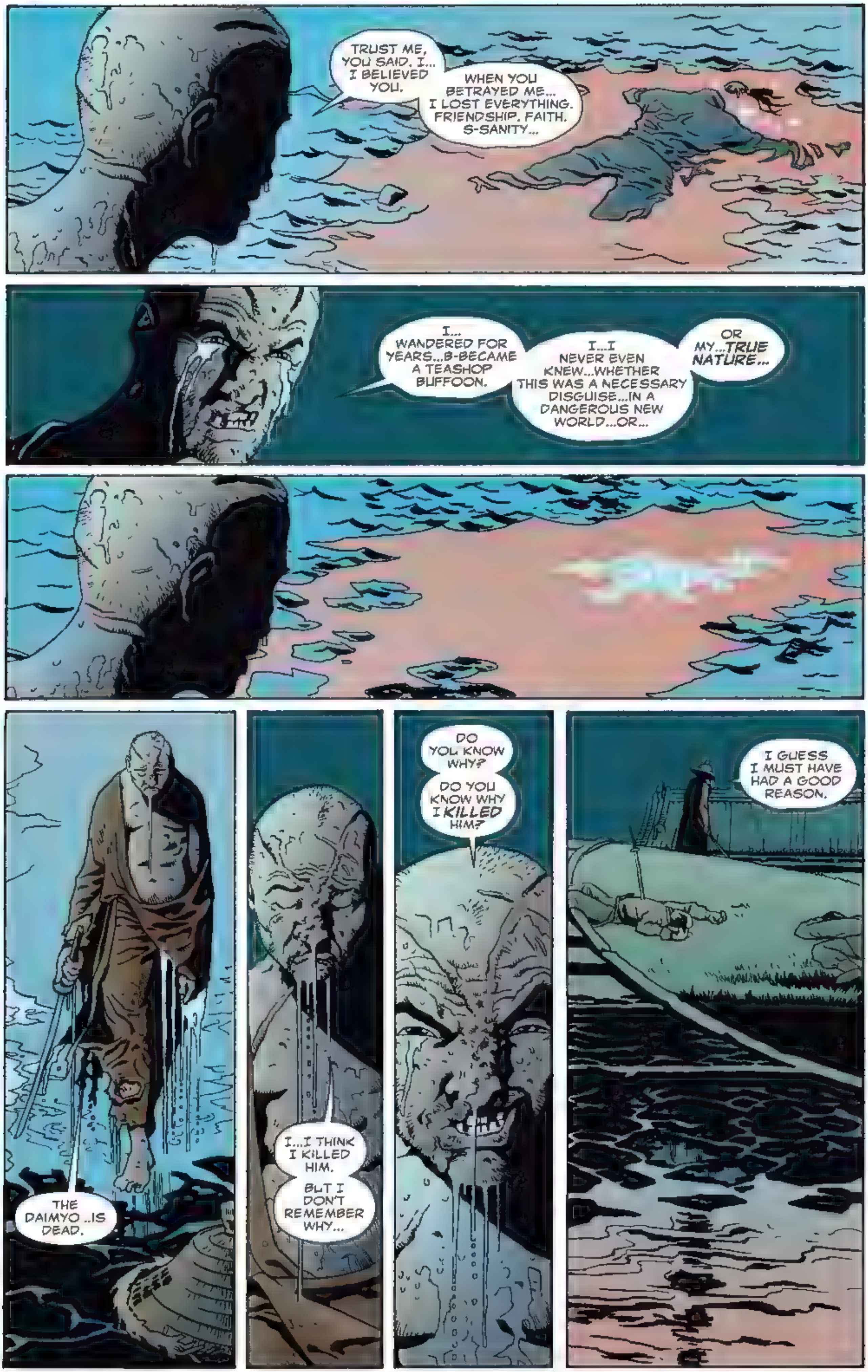

ANSWER ME. WHY ARE YOU HERE?
SO I CAN KILL YOU, I SUPPOSE.
YOU DON'T KNOW?
AN EDUCATED GUESS.
I SUPPOSE YOU DON'T...EVEN KNOW WHY YOU WANT TO KILL ME?
N-NO... I DON'T REMEMBER WHY...
BUT IT SEEMS I MUST.
IT'S A MATTER OF LIFE OR DEATH.
ARRGHH!
MAINLY, DEATH.

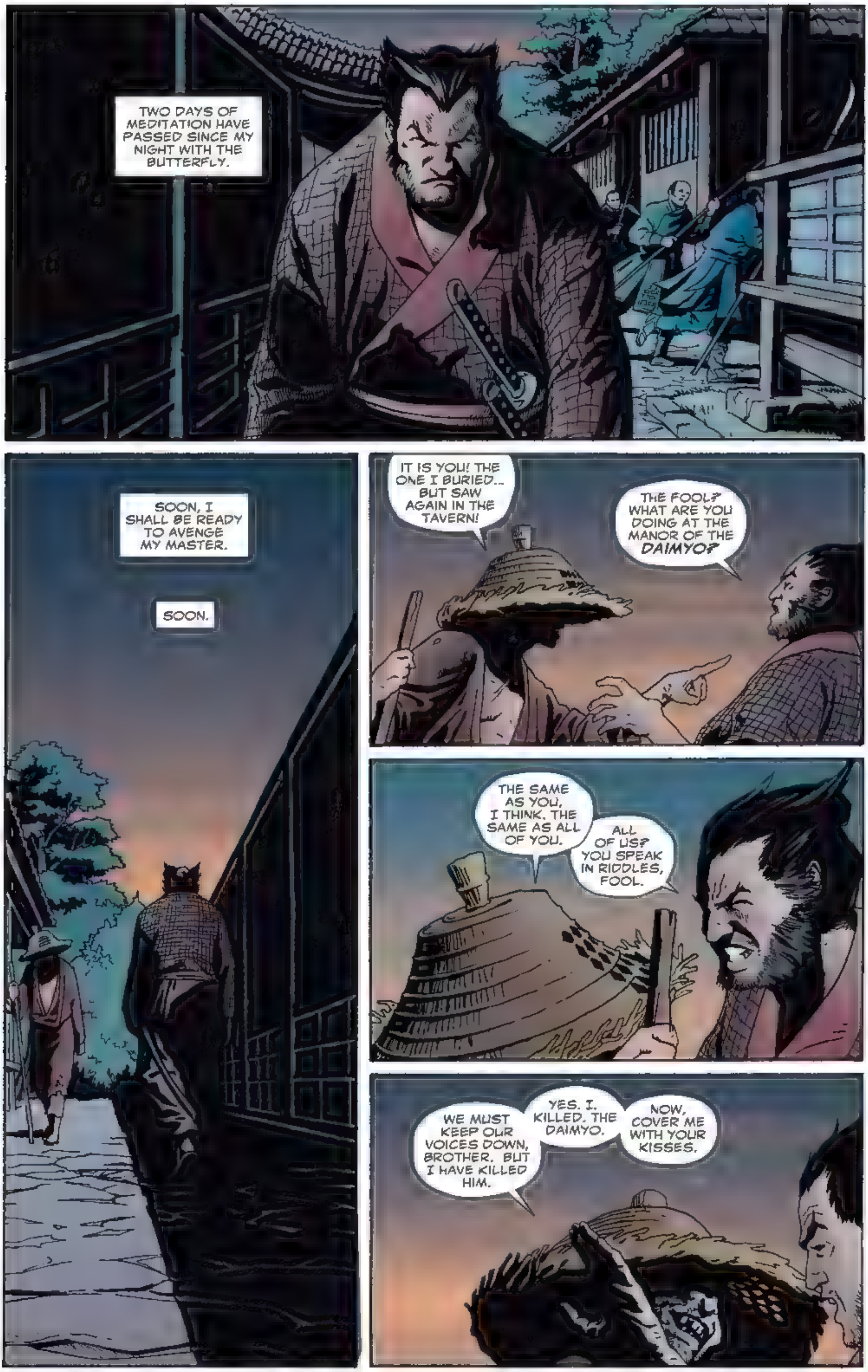

COME, WATARI. DO YOU THINK I'D BE SO EASY TO DEFEAT?
IF YOUR FOOLISHNESS IS *REAL*...YOU MAY NOT REMEMBER... BUT I WAS ONCE A *SOLDIER*.
SKILLED. LETHAL.
DEVIOUS.
UGHH!
I SENT YOU TO YOUR *DEATH*, WATARI. THAT'S THE TRUTH. YOU KNOW WHY? YOU WERE TOO DANGEROUS TO BE ALLOWED TO LIVE.
DO YOU KNOW WHAT I'M TALKING ABOUT, WATARI? COME, HOW MUCH DO YOU REMEMBER ABOUT OUR *PAST*?
REMEMBER? I...I REMEMBER A MAN WITH CLAWS WHO WOULDN'T DIE.
I REMEMBER... A MAN IN WHITE WHO COULDN'T STOP *KILLING*.
I REMEMBER A MAN ON A MOUNTAIN...WHO BECAME A MONSTER.

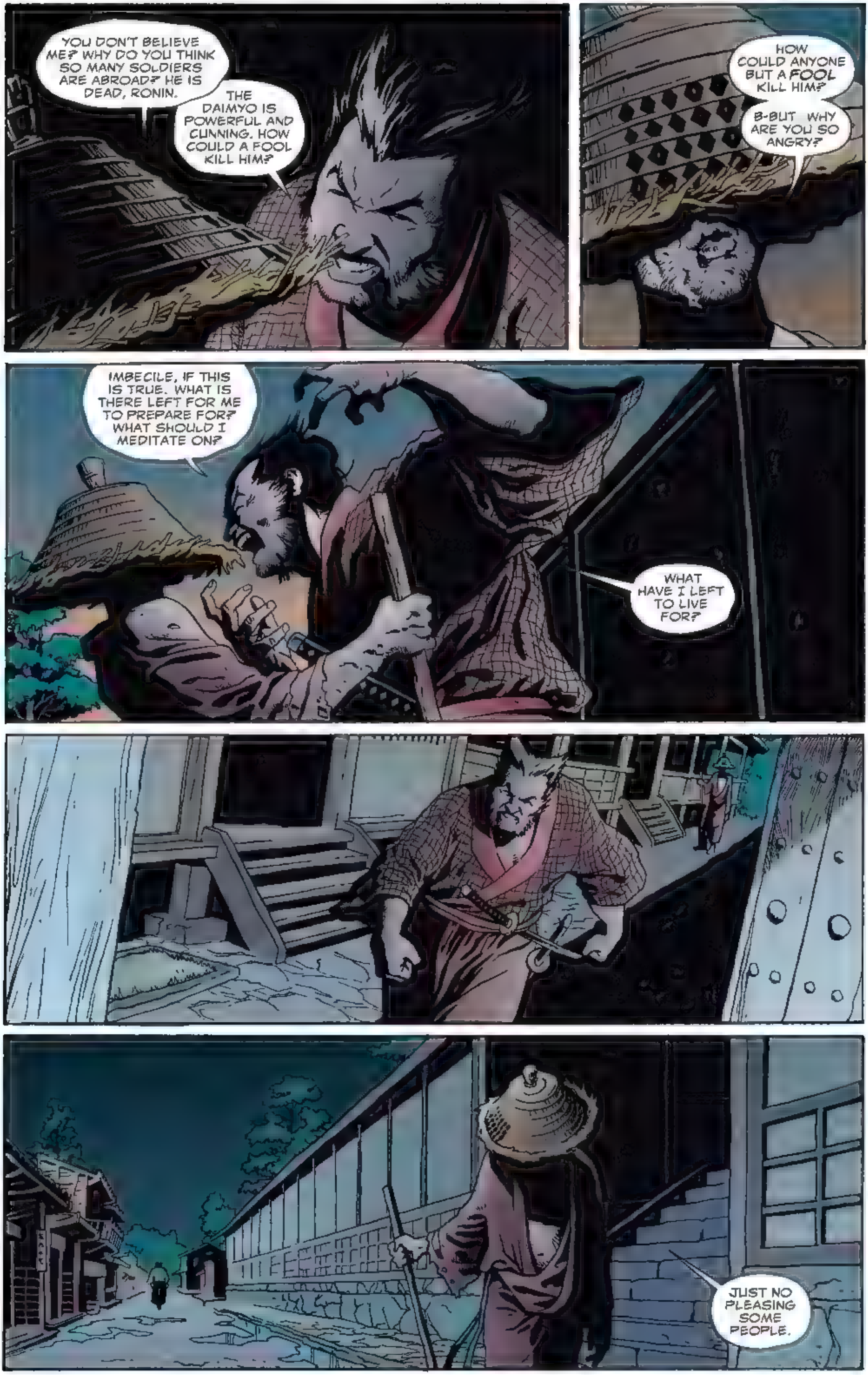

WHAT IS THIS *GIBBERISH?* WHAT ARE YOU *TALKING* ABOUT?
KKKRSHH
AHH!
WATARI, WAIT! I...I WILL NOT BEG FOR MY LIFE. B-BUT I AM RICH. POWERFUL. I CAN GIVE YOU LAND, POSITION, THE FINEST GIRLS FROM *YOSHIWARA*
I DON'T THINK THOSE THINGS MEAN ANYTHING TO ME ANYMORE.
BUT THINK ABOUT THIS... Y-YOU CAME HERE TO KILL ME.. WITHOUT EVEN... KNOWING WHY THAT'S ..
THAT'S .. *INSANE*.
YES.
IT *IS*, ISN'T IT?

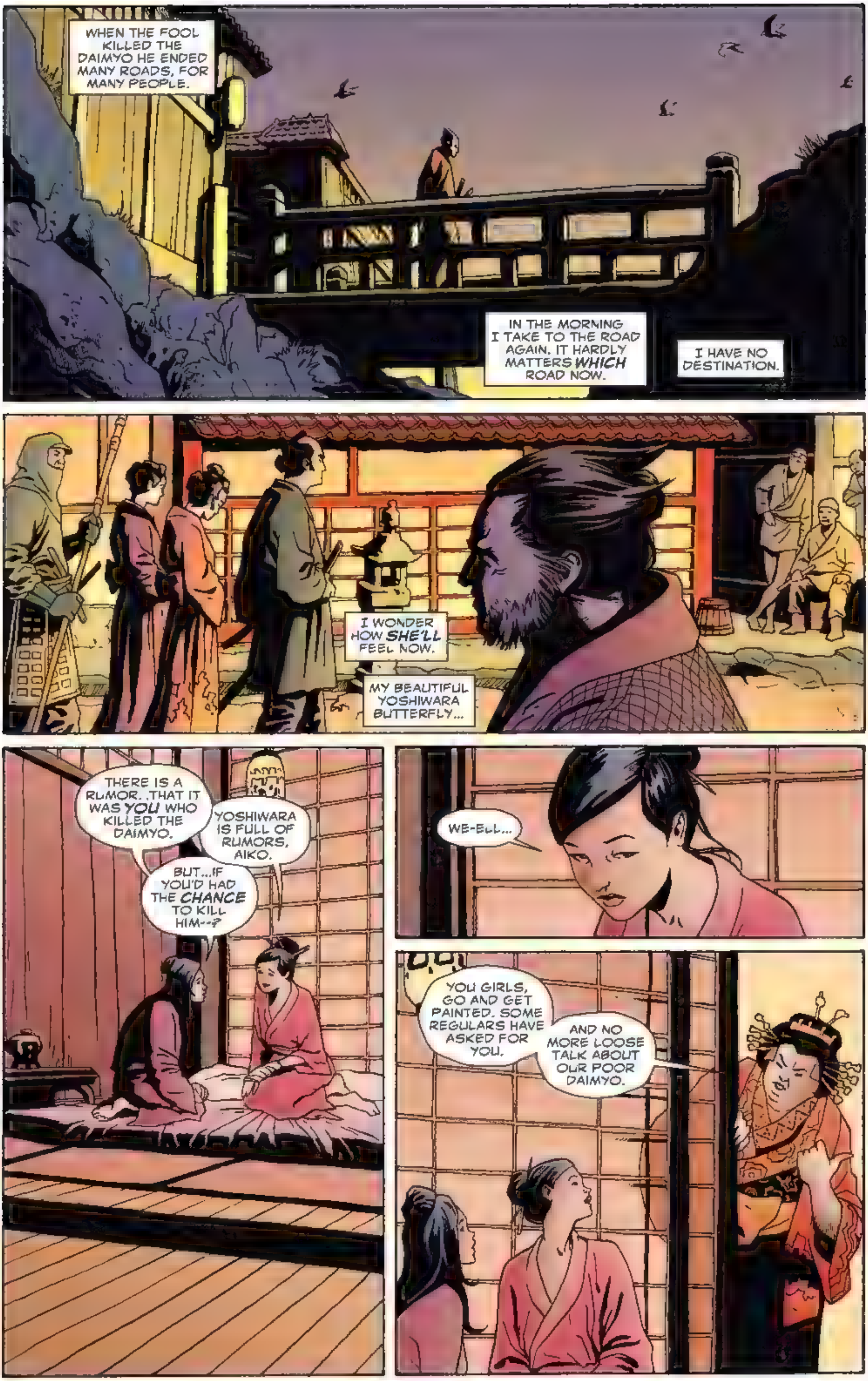

AS HIS LIFE EBBS AWAY.. SOMETHING HAPPENS.
IT'S LIKE A FOG LIFTING
A CLOUD...
PARTING.
TAKE YOUR MEN AGAINST THEIR RIGHT FLANK.
WE'LL BE OUTNUMBERED TWENTY TO ONE.
MY SOLDIERS WILL ATTACK THEM FROM THEIR REAR.
TRUST ME, WATARI...
".. I WON'T LET YOU DOWN."

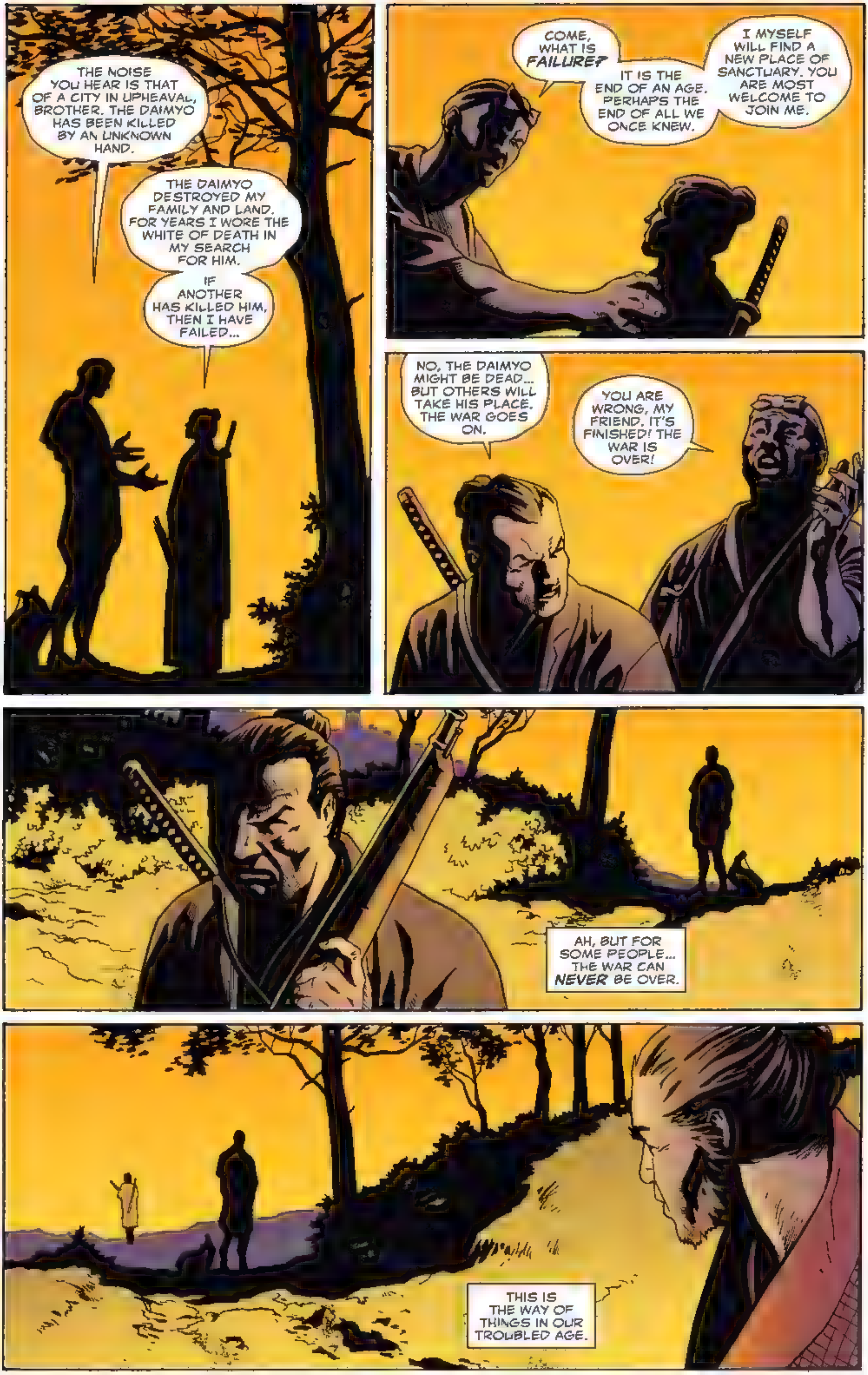

IT'S THE STENCH THAT WOKE ME.
THE FOULEST STENCH YOU CAN IMAGINE.
THE THING THAT CRAWLED OUT OF THERE LOOKED LIKE A MAN.
OH, IT HAD THE *SHAPE* OF A MAN.
BUT IT WASN'T A MAN. NOT REALLY.
NOT ANY LONGER

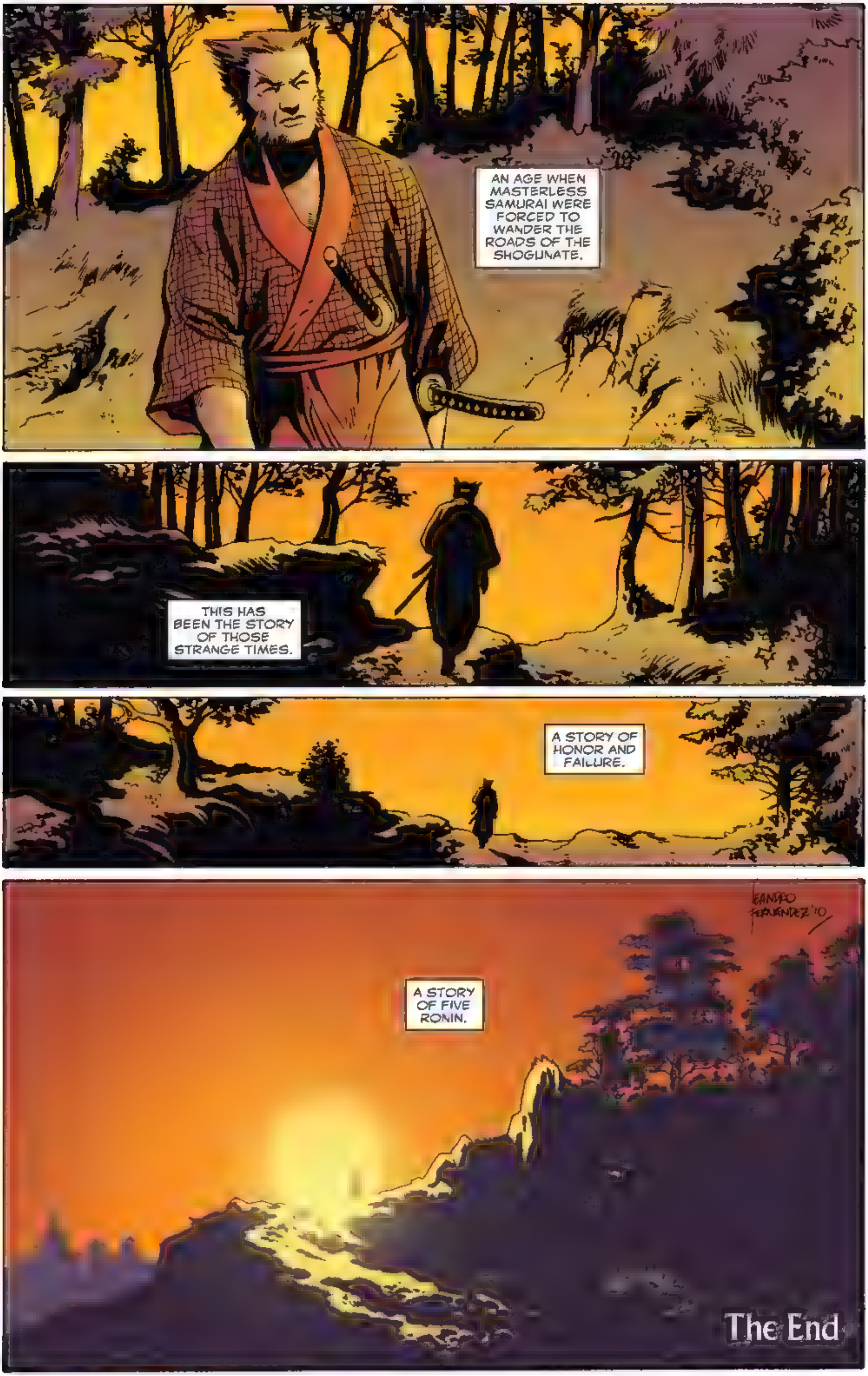

TRUST ME, YOU SAID. I... I BELIEVED YOU.
WHEN YOU BETRAYED ME... I LOST EVERYTHING. FRIENDSHIP. FAITH. S-SANITY...
I... WANDERED FOR YEARS...B-BECAME A TEASHOP BUFFOON.
I...I NEVER EVEN KNEW...WHETHER THIS WAS A NECESSARY DISGUISE...IN A DANGEROUS NEW WORLD...OR...
OR MY...*TRUE NATURE...*
THE DAIMYO ..IS DEAD.
I...I THINK I KILLED HIM.
BUT I DON'T REMEMBER WHY...
DO YOU KNOW WHY?
DO YOU KNOW WHY I *KILLED* HIM?
I GUESS I MUST HAVE HAD A GOOD REASON.


TWO DAYS OF MEDITATION HAVE PASSED SINCE MY NIGHT WITH THE BUTTERFLY.
SOON, I SHALL BE READY TO AVENGE MY MASTER.
SOON.
IT IS YOU! THE ONE I BURIED... BUT SAW AGAIN IN THE TAVERN!
THE FOOL? WHAT ARE YOU DOING AT THE MANOR OF THE *DAIMYO?*
THE SAME AS YOU, I THINK. THE SAME AS ALL OF YOU.
ALL OF US? YOU SPEAK IN RIDDLES, FOOL.
WE MUST KEEP OUR VOICES DOWN, BROTHER. BUT I HAVE KILLED HIM.
YES. I. KILLED. THE DAIMYO.
NOW, COVER ME WITH YOUR KISSES.

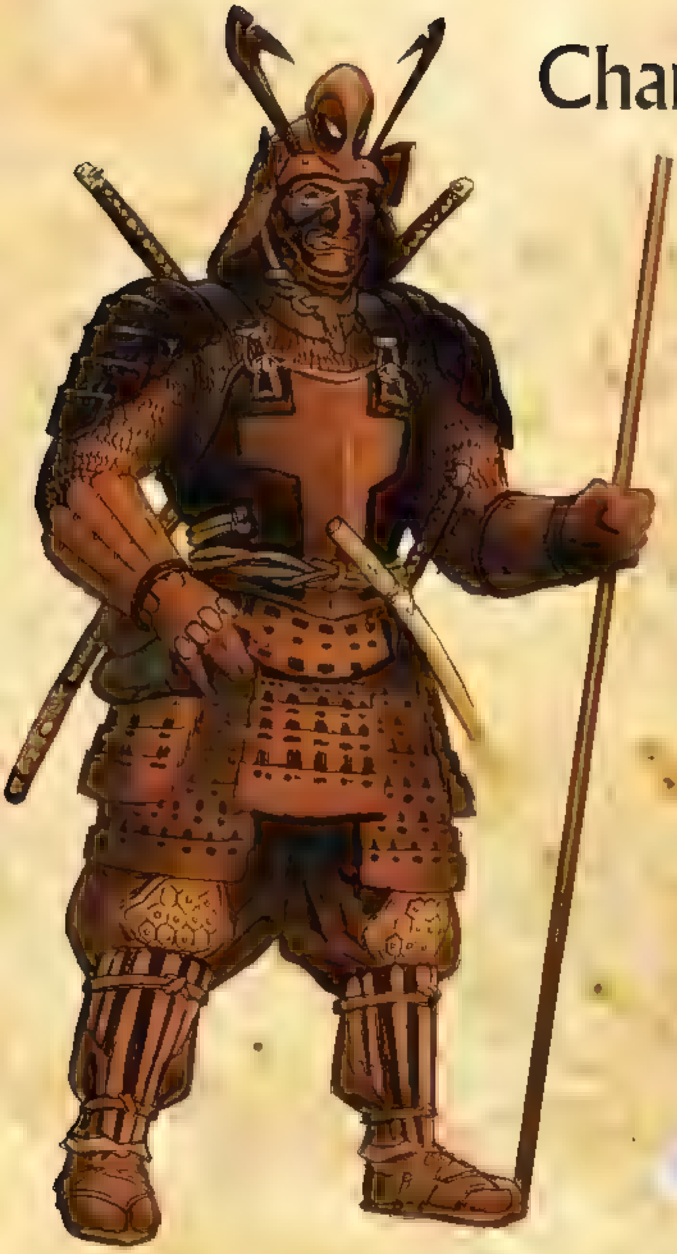

YOU DON'T BELIEVE ME? WHY DO YOU THINK SO MANY SOLDIERS ARE ABROAD? HE IS DEAD, RONIN.
THE DAIMYO IS POWERFUL AND CUNNING. HOW COULD A FOOL KILL HIM?
HOW COULD ANYONE BUT A FOOL KILL HIM?
B-BUT WHY ARE YOU SO ANGRY?
IMBECILE, IF THIS IS TRUE. WHAT IS THERE LEFT FOR ME TO PREPARE FOR? WHAT SHOULD I MEDITATE ON?
WHAT HAVE I LEFT TO LIVE FOR?
JUST NO PLEASING SOME PEOPLE.


WHEN THE FOOL KILLED THE DAIMYO HE ENDED MANY ROADS, FOR MANY PEOPLE.
IN THE MORNING I TAKE TO THE ROAD AGAIN. IT HARDLY MATTERS **WHICH** ROAD NOW.
I HAVE NO DESTINATION.
I WONDER HOW **SHE'LL** FEEL NOW.
MY BEAUTIFUL YOSHIWARA BUTTERFLY...
THERE IS A RUMOR. THAT IT WAS **YOU** WHO KILLED THE DAIMYO.
YOSHIWARA IS FULL OF RUMORS, AIKO.
BUT...IF YOU'D HAD THE **CHANCE** TO KILL HIM--?
WE-ELL...
YOU GIRLS, GO AND GET PAINTED. SOME REGULARS HAVE ASKED FOR YOU.
AND NO MORE LOOSE TALK ABOUT OUR POOR DAIMYO.


THE NOISE YOU HEAR IS THAT OF A CITY IN UPHEAVAL, BROTHER. THE DAIMYO HAS BEEN KILLED BY AN UNKNOWN HAND.
THE DAIMYO DESTROYED MY FAMILY AND LAND. FOR YEARS I WORE THE WHITE OF DEATH IN MY SEARCH FOR HIM.
IF ANOTHER HAS KILLED HIM, THEN I HAVE FAILED...
COME, WHAT IS *FAILURE?*
IT IS THE END OF AN AGE. PERHAPS THE END OF ALL WE ONCE KNEW.
I MYSELF WILL FIND A NEW PLACE OF SANCTUARY. YOU ARE MOST WELCOME TO JOIN ME.
NO, THE DAIMYO MIGHT BE DEAD... BUT OTHERS WILL TAKE HIS PLACE. THE WAR GOES ON.
YOU ARE WRONG, MY FRIEND. IT'S FINISHED! THE WAR IS OVER!
AH, BUT FOR SOME PEOPLE... THE WAR CAN *NEVER* BE OVER.
THIS IS THE WAY OF THINGS IN OUR TROUBLED AGE.


AN AGE WHEN MASTERLESS SAMURAI WERE FORCED TO WANDER THE ROADS OF THE SHOGUNATE.
THIS HAS BEEN THE STORY OF THOSE STRANGE TIMES.
A STORY OF HONOR AND FAILURE.
LEANDRO FERNÁNDEZ '10
A STORY OF FIVE RONIN.
The End

Character Sketches by Leandro Fernandez



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NOVA

TOBIN
CLIQUET
SANTOS
SOTOMAYOR

CAPTAIN AMERICA

STEVE ROGERS
PEAK PHYSICAL SOLDIER, MASTER STRATEGIST

THE VISION

ANDROID, PHASES THROUGH MATTER, SUPER-STRENGTH

IRON MAN

TONY STARK
BILLIONAIRE INVENTOR, ONE-MAN ARMORED TANK

INVISIBLE WOMAN

SUSAN STORM
TURNS INVISIBLE, CREATES FORCE BUBBLES

THOR

ASGARDIAN GOD, WIELDS MAGICAL HAMMER

BLACK WIDOW

NATASHA ROMANOVA
SUPER-SPY, COVERT SPECIALIST

NOVA

RICHARD RIDER
COSMIC-POWERED KID, STRONG & FAST FLIER

THERE ARE DANGERS THAT MANKIND CANNOT CONQUER. A MIGHTY FEW WOULD RISK THEIR LIVES TO DEFEND US ALL. THEY ARE

SUPER HEROES

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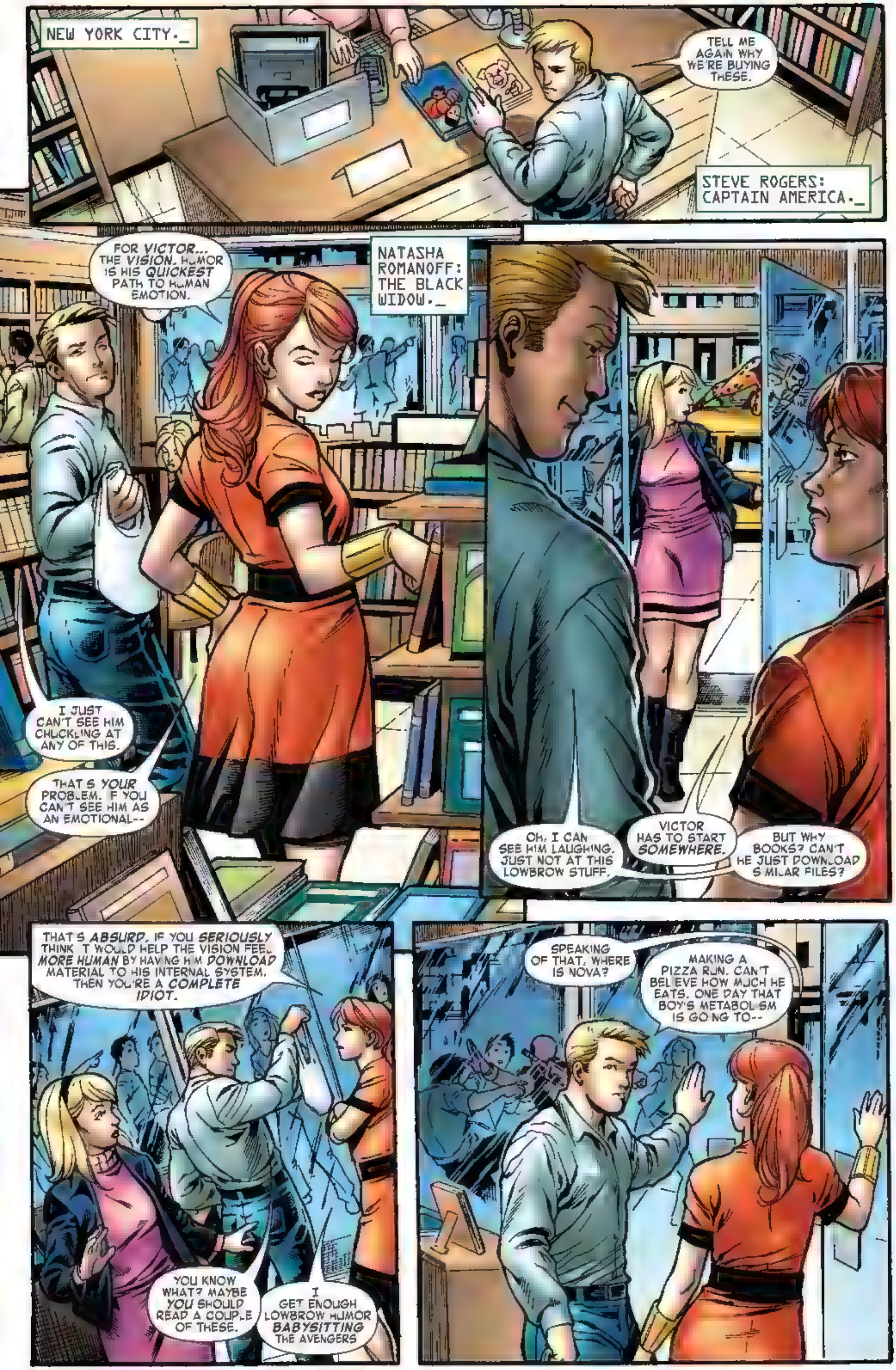
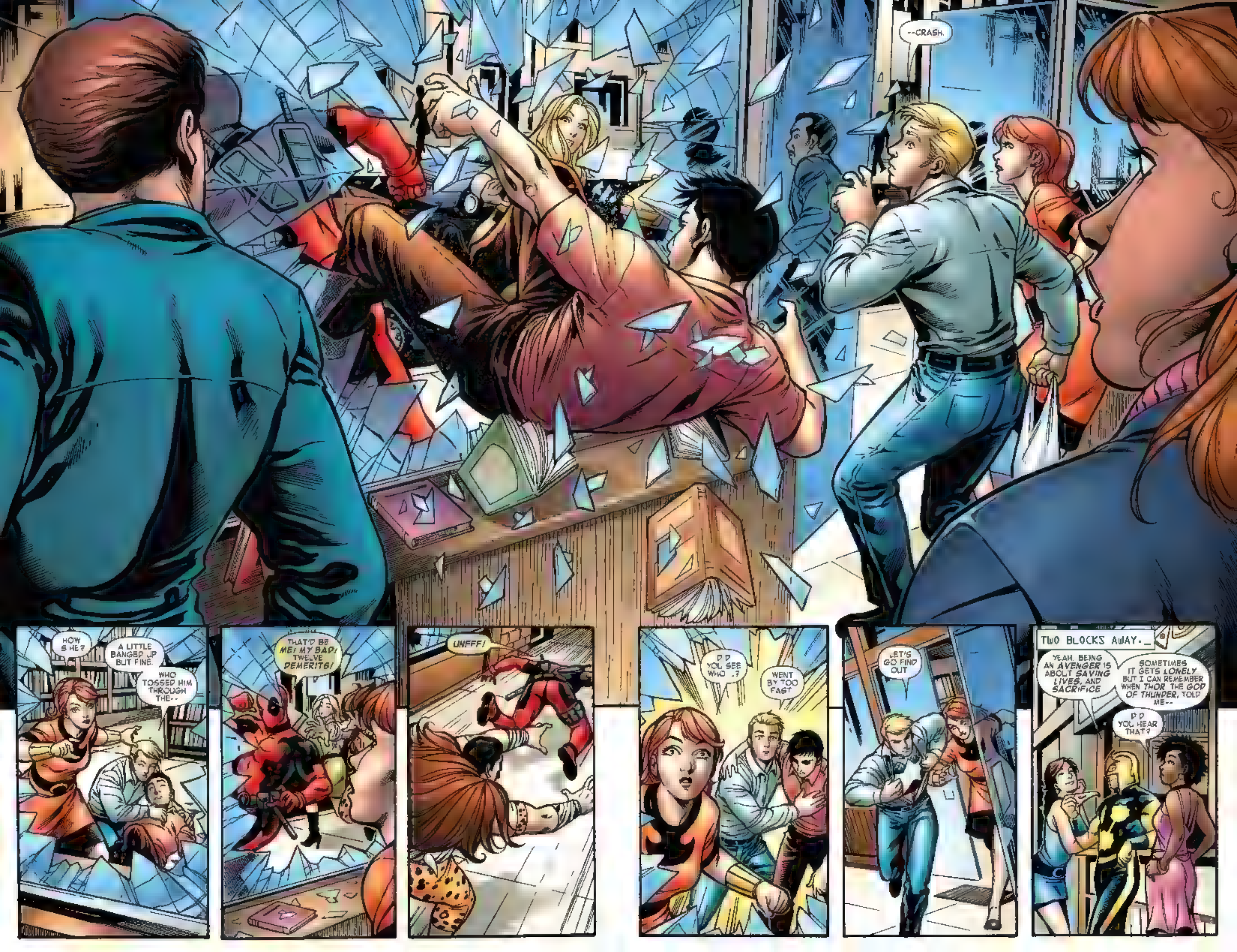
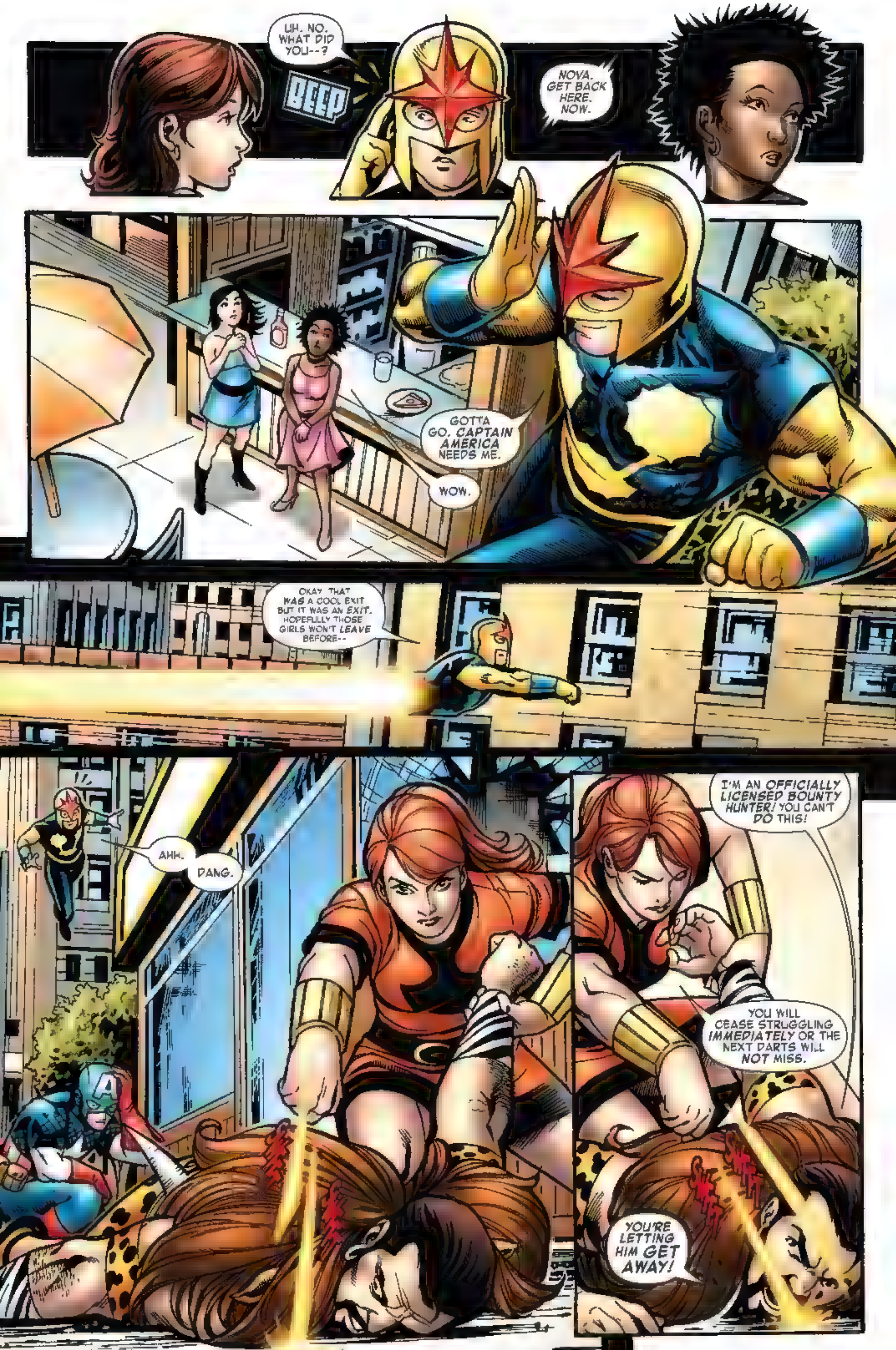
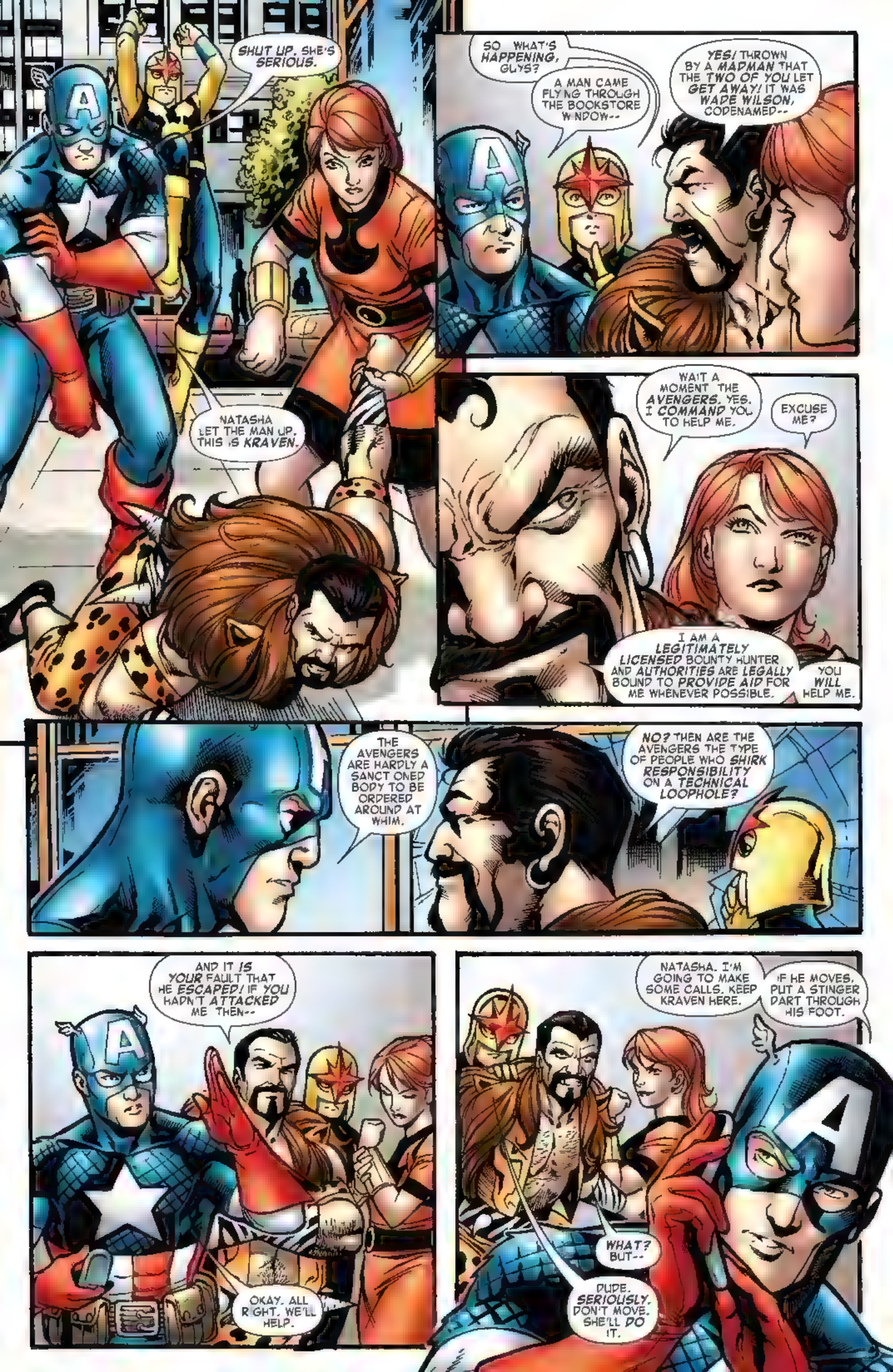
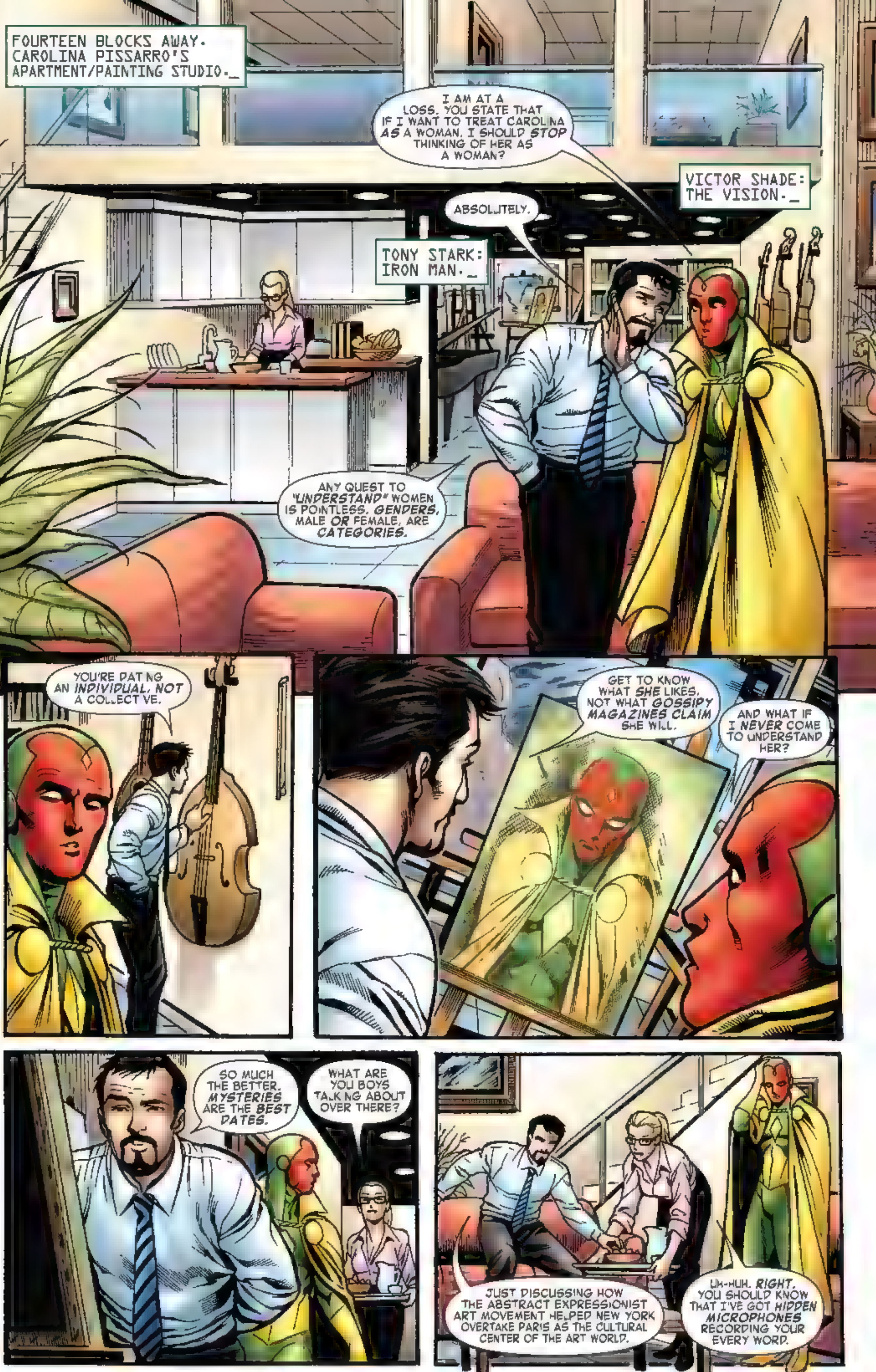
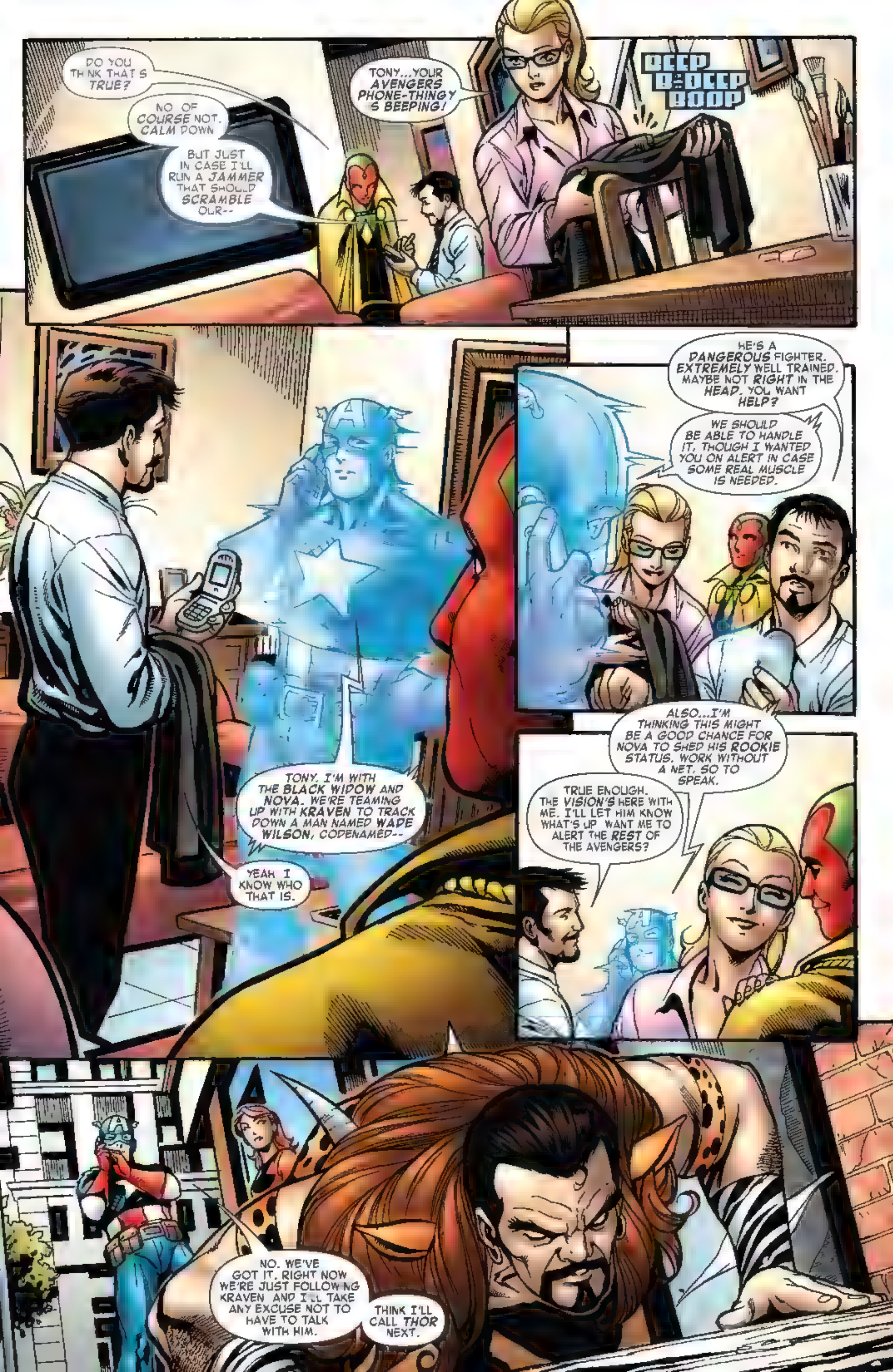

NEW YORK CITY._
TELL ME AGAIN WHY WE'RE BUYING THESE.
STEVE ROGERS: CAPTAIN AMERICA._
FOR VICTOR... THE VISION. HUMOR IS HIS QUICKEST PATH TO HUMAN EMOTION.
NATASHA ROMANOFF: THE BLACK WIDOW._
I JUST CAN'T SEE HIM CHUCKLING AT ANY OF THIS.
THAT'S YOUR PROBLEM. IF YOU CAN'T SEE HIM AS AN EMOTIONAL--
OH, I CAN SEE HIM LAUGHING. JUST NOT AT THIS LOWBROW STUFF.
VICTOR HAS TO START SOMEWHERE.
BUT WHY BOOKS? CAN'T HE JUST DOWNLOAD SIMILAR FILES?
THAT'S ABSURD. IF YOU SERIOUSLY THINK IT WOULD HELP THE VISION FEEL MORE HUMAN BY HAVING HIM DOWNLOAD MATERIAL TO HIS INTERNAL SYSTEM, THEN YOU'RE A COMPLETE IDIOT.
YOU KNOW WHAT? MAYBE YOU SHOULD READ A COUPLE OF THESE.
I GET ENOUGH LOWBROW HUMOR BABYSITTING THE AVENGERS.
SPEAKING OF THAT, WHERE IS NOVA?
MAKING A PIZZA RUN. CAN'T BELIEVE HOW MUCH HE EATS. ONE DAY THAT BOY'S METABOLISM IS GOING TO--

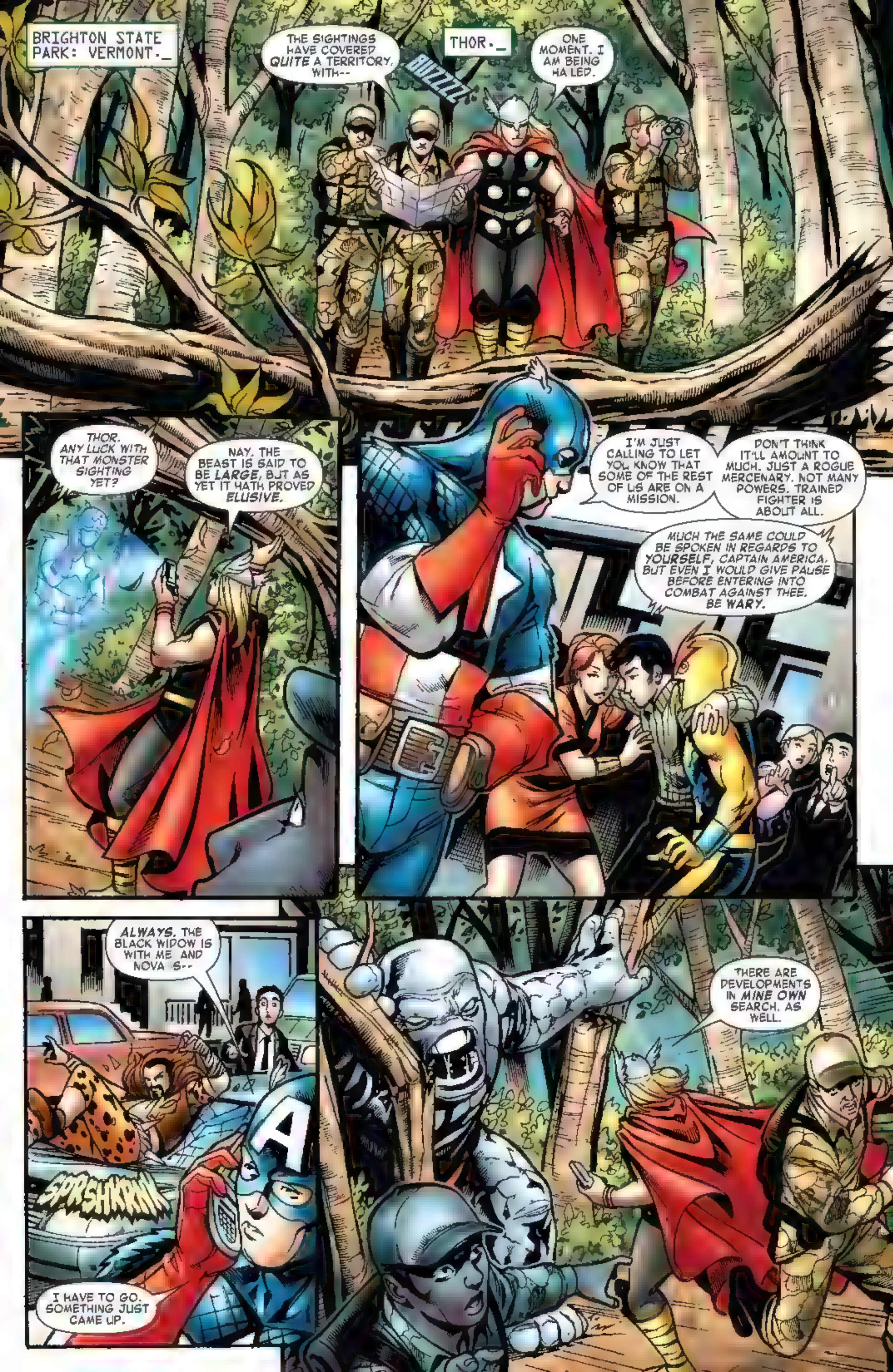

--CRASH.
HOW IS HE?
A LITTLE BANGED UP BUT FINE.
WHO TOSSED HIM THROUGH THE--
THAT'D BE ME! MY BAD! TWELVE DEMERITS!
UNFFF!
DID YOU SEE WHO..?
WENT BY TOO FAST
LET'S GO FIND OUT
TWO BLOCKS AWAY...
YEAH. BEING AN AVENGER IS ABOUT SAVING LIVES, AND SACRIFICE
SOMETIMES IT GETS LONELY BUT I CAN REMEMBER WHEN THOR THE GOD OF THUNDER, TOLD ME--
DID YOU HEAR THAT?

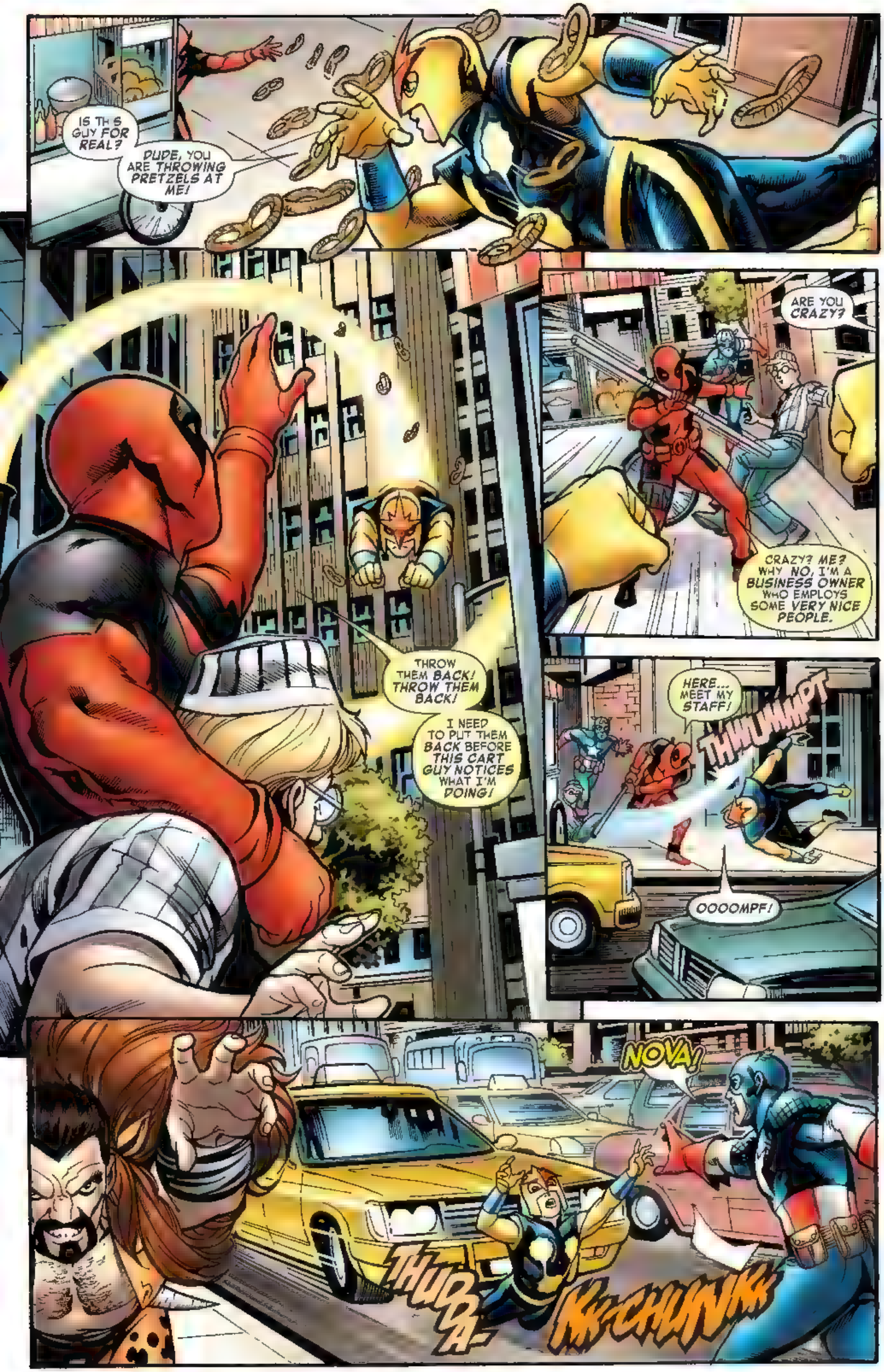

UH. NO. WHAT DID YOU--?
BEEP
NOVA. GET BACK HERE. NOW.
GOTTA GO. CAPTAIN AMERICA NEEDS ME.
WOW.
OKAY THAT WAS A COOL EXIT BUT IT WAS AN EXIT. HOPEFULLY THOSE GIRLS WON'T LEAVE BEFORE--
AHH.
DANG.
I'M AN OFFICIALLY LICENSED BOUNTY HUNTER! YOU CAN'T DO THIS!
YOU WILL CEASE STRUGGLING IMMEDIATELY OR THE NEXT DARTS WILL NOT MISS.
YOU'RE LETTING HIM GET AWAY!

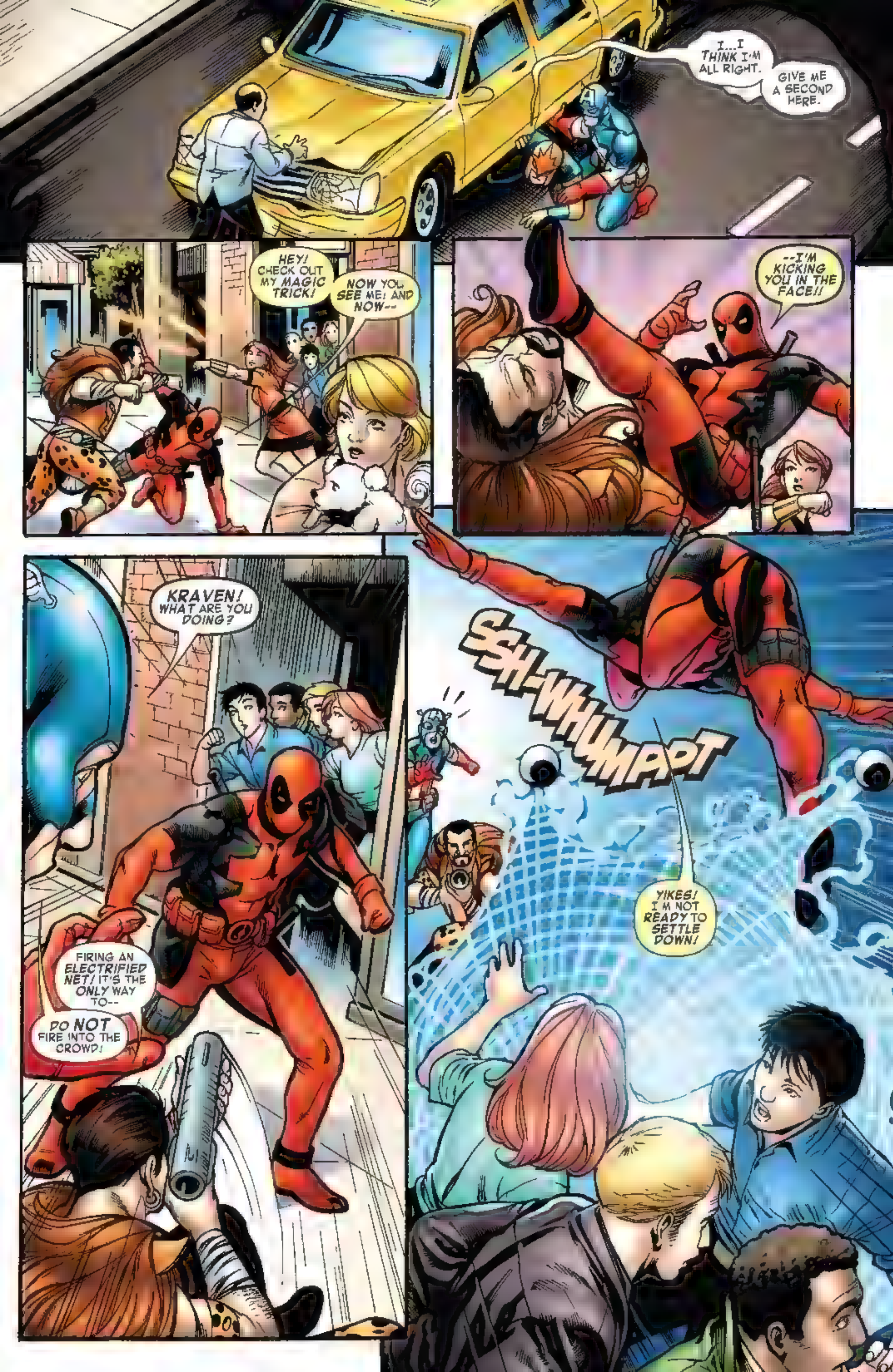

SHUT UP. SHE'S SERIOUS.
NATASHA LET THE MAN UP. THIS IS KRAVEN.
SO... WHAT'S HAPPENING, GUYS?
A MAN CAME FLYING THROUGH THE BOOKSTORE WINDOW--
YES! THROWN BY A MADMAN THAT THE TWO OF YOU LET GET AWAY! IT WAS WADE WILSON, CODENAMED--
WAIT A MOMENT. THE AVENGERS. YES. I COMMAND YOU TO HELP ME.
EXCUSE ME?
I AM A LEGITIMATELY LICENSED BOUNTY HUNTER AND AUTHORITIES ARE LEGALLY BOUND TO PROVIDE AID FOR ME WHENEVER POSSIBLE.
YOU WILL HELP ME.
THE AVENGERS ARE HARDLY A SANCTIONED BODY TO BE ORDERED AROUND AT WHIM.
NO? THEN ARE THE AVENGERS THE TYPE OF PEOPLE WHO SHIRK RESPONSIBILITY ON A TECHNICAL LOOPHOLE?
AND IT IS YOUR FAULT THAT HE ESCAPED! IF YOU HADN'T ATTACKED ME THEN--
OKAY. ALL RIGHT. WE'LL HELP.
NATASHA. I'M GOING TO MAKE SOME CALLS. KEEP KRAVEN HERE.
IF HE MOVES, PUT A STINGER DART THROUGH HIS FOOT.
WHAT? BUT--
DUDE. SERIOUSLY. DON'T MOVE. SHE'LL DO IT.

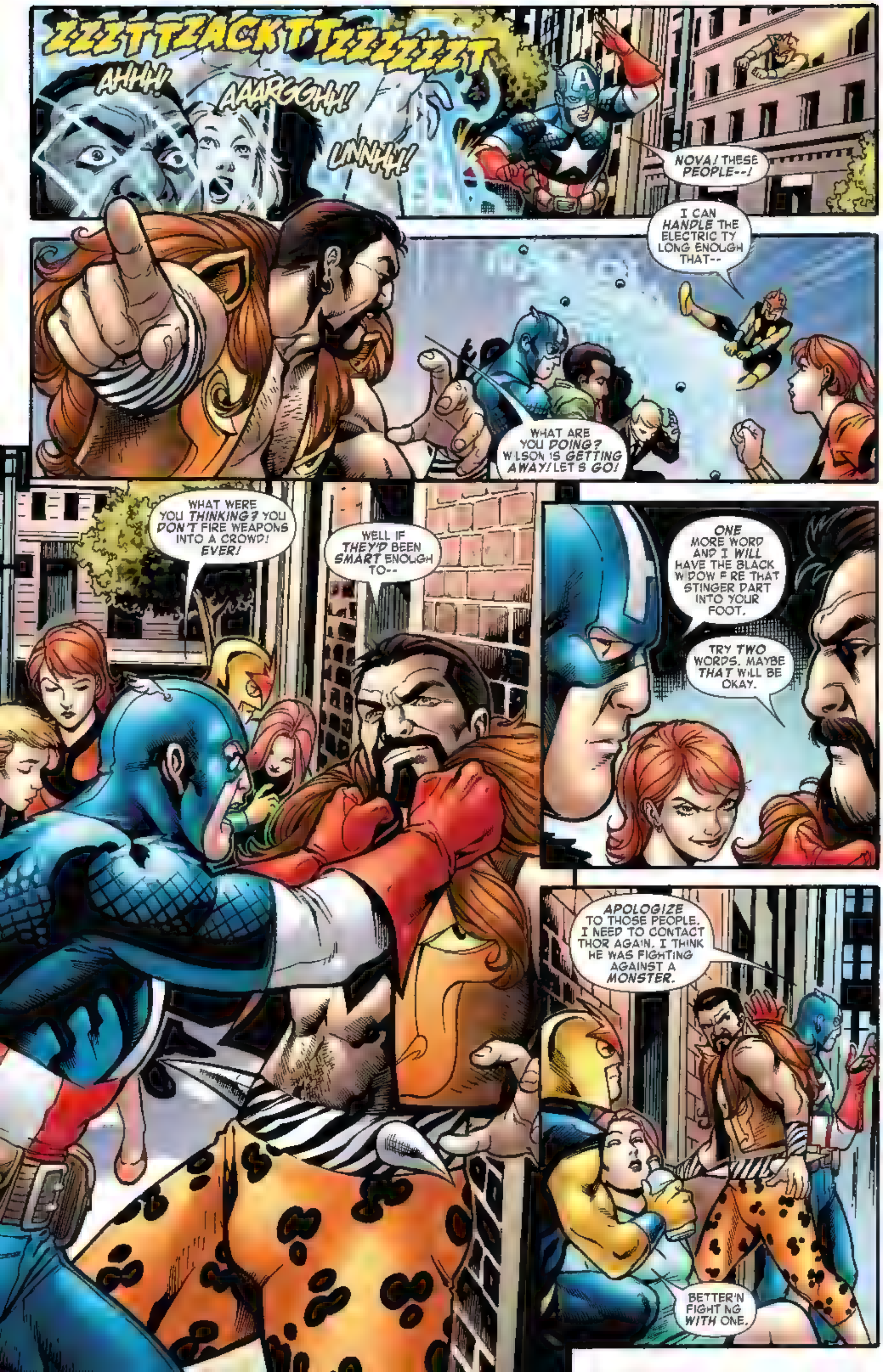

FOURTEEN BLOCKS AWAY. CAROLINA PISSARRO'S APARTMENT/PAINTING STUDIO._
I AM AT A LOSS. YOU STATE THAT IF I WANT TO TREAT CAROLINA AS A WOMAN, I SHOULD STOP THINKING OF HER AS A WOMAN?
VICTOR SHADE: THE VISION._
ABSOLUTELY.
TONY STARK: IRON MAN._
ANY QUEST TO "UNDERSTAND" WOMEN IS POINTLESS. GENDERS, MALE OR FEMALE, ARE CATEGORIES.
YOU'RE DATING AN INDIVIDUAL, NOT A COLLECTIVE.
GET TO KNOW WHAT SHE LIKES, NOT WHAT GOSSIPY MAGAZINES CLAIM SHE WILL.
AND WHAT IF I NEVER COME TO UNDERSTAND HER?
SO MUCH THE BETTER. MYSTERIES ARE THE BEST DATES.
WHAT ARE YOU BOYS TALKING ABOUT OVER THERE?
JUST DISCUSSING HOW THE ABSTRACT EXPRESSIONIST ART MOVEMENT HELPED NEW YORK OVERTAKE PARIS AS THE CULTURAL CENTER OF THE ART WORLD.
UH-HUH. RIGHT. YOU SHOULD KNOW THAT I'VE GOT HIDDEN MICROPHONES RECORDING YOUR EVERY WORD.

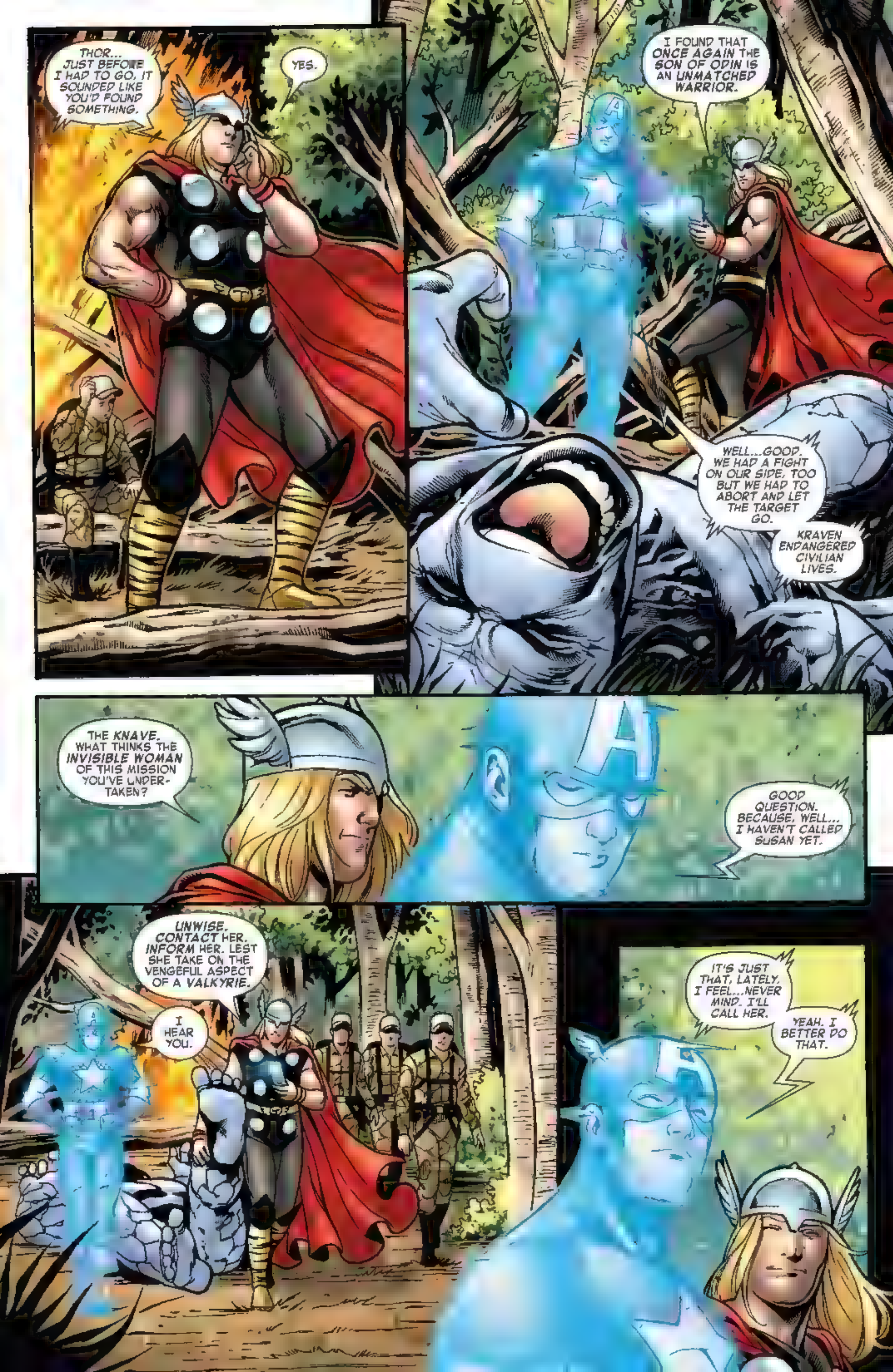

DO YOU THINK THAT'S TRUE?
NO. OF COURSE NOT. CALM DOWN.
BUT JUST IN CASE I'LL RUN A JAMMER THAT SHOULD SCRAMBLE OUR--
TONY...YOUR AVENGERS PHONE-THINGY'S BEEPING!
BEEP B-BEEP BOOP
TONY, I'M WITH THE BLACK WIDOW AND NOVA. WE'RE TEAMING UP WITH KRAVEN TO TRACK DOWN A MAN NAMED WADE WILSON, CODENAMED--
YEAH. I KNOW WHO THAT IS.
HE'S A DANGEROUS FIGHTER. EXTREMELY WELL TRAINED. MAYBE NOT RIGHT IN THE HEAD. YOU WANT HELP?
WE SHOULD BE ABLE TO HANDLE IT, THOUGH I WANTED YOU ON ALERT IN CASE SOME REAL MUSCLE IS NEEDED.
ALSO...I'M THINKING THIS MIGHT BE A GOOD CHANCE FOR NOVA TO SHED HIS ROOKIE STATUS. WORK WITHOUT A NET, SO TO SPEAK.
TRUE ENOUGH. THE VISION'S HERE WITH ME. I'LL LET HIM KNOW WHAT'S UP. WANT ME TO ALERT THE REST OF THE AVENGERS?
NO. WE'VE GOT IT. RIGHT NOW WE'RE JUST FOLLOWING KRAVEN, AND I'LL TAKE ANY EXCUSE NOT TO HAVE TO TALK WITH HIM.
THINK I'LL CALL THOR NEXT.

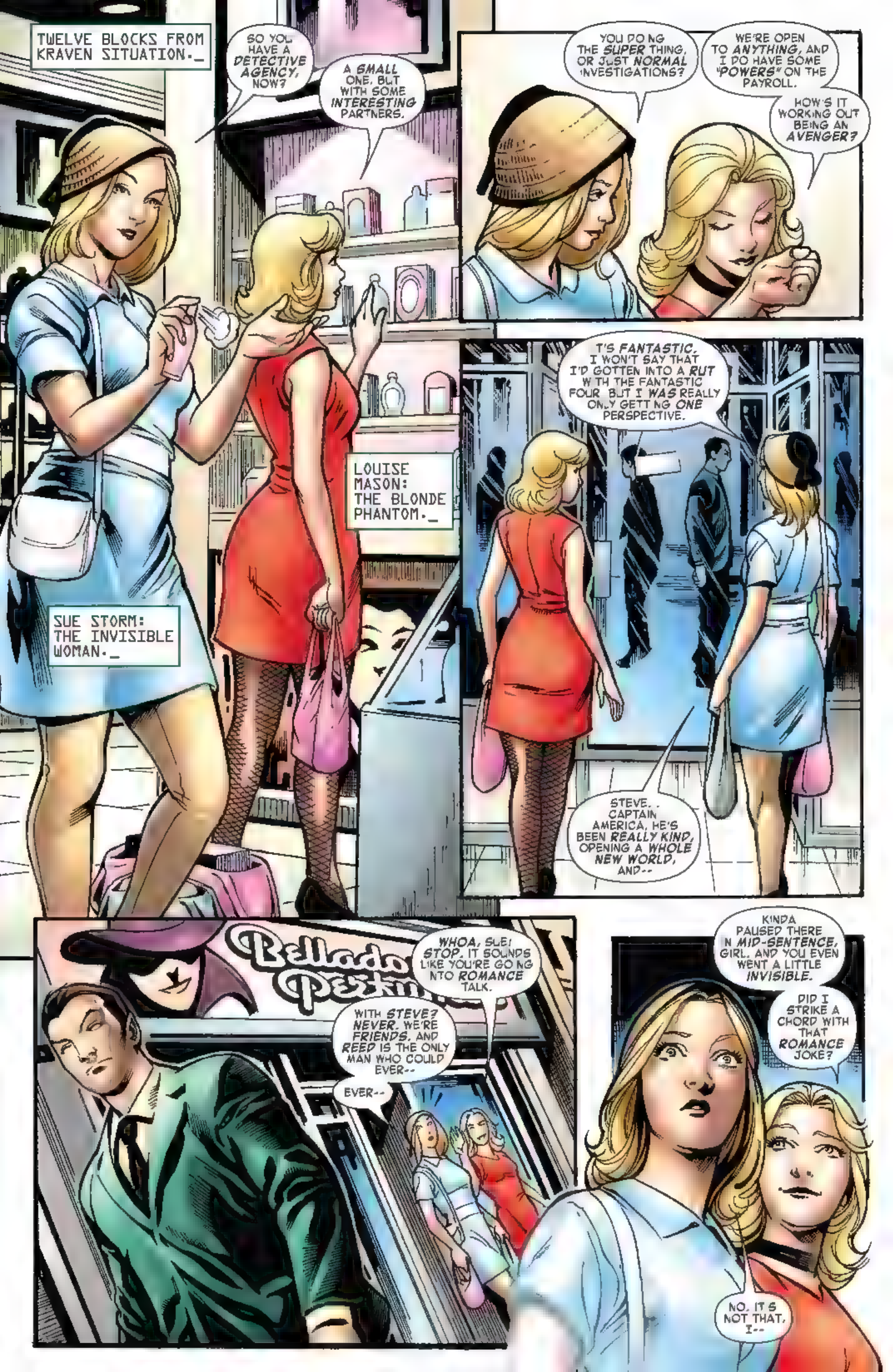

BRIGHTON STATE PARK: VERMONT._
THE SIGHTINGS HAVE COVERED *QUITE* A TERRITORY. WITH--
BUZZZT
THOR._
ONE MOMENT. I AM BEING HAILED.
THOR. ANY LUCK WITH THAT MONSTER SIGHTING YET?
NAY. THE BEAST IS SAID TO BE *LARGE*, BUT AS YET IT HATH PROVED *ELUSIVE*.
I'M JUST CALLING TO LET YOU KNOW THAT SOME OF THE REST OF US ARE ON A MISSION.
DON'T THINK IT'LL AMOUNT TO MUCH. JUST A ROGUE MERCENARY. NOT MANY POWERS. TRAINED FIGHTER IS ABOUT ALL.
MUCH THE SAME COULD BE SPOKEN IN REGARDS TO *YOURSELF*, CAPTAIN AMERICA, BUT EVEN I WOULD GIVE PAUSE BEFORE ENTERING INTO COMBAT AGAINST THEE. BE *WARY*.
ALWAYS. THE BLACK WIDOW IS WITH ME AND NOVA IS--
SPRSHKRAK
I HAVE TO GO. SOMETHING JUST CAME UP.
THERE ARE DEVELOPMENTS IN *MINE OWN* SEARCH, AS WELL.

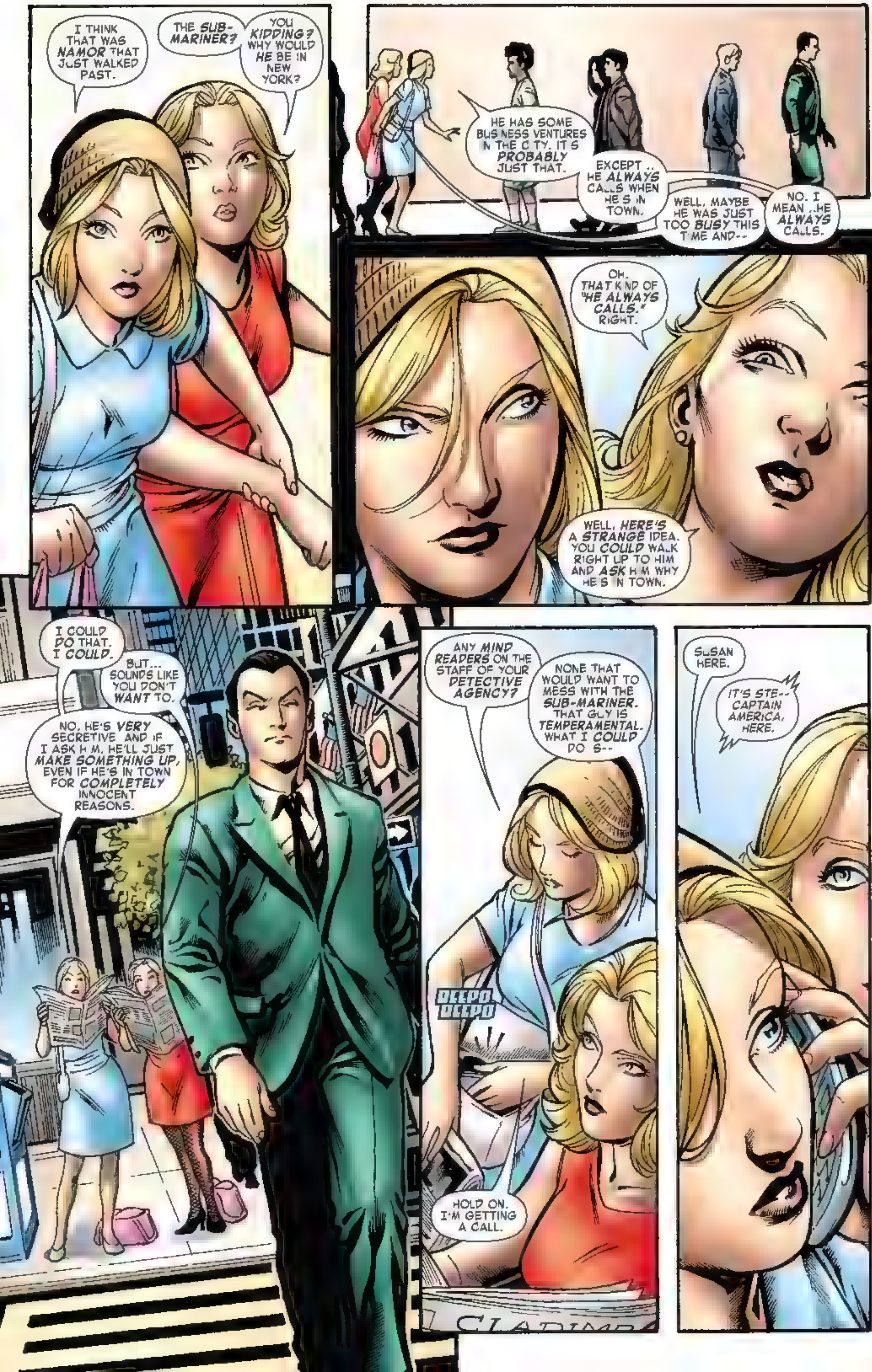

IS THIS GUY FOR REAL?
DUDE, YOU ARE THROWING PRETZELS AT ME!
THROW THEM BACK! THROW THEM BACK!
I NEED TO PUT THEM BACK BEFORE THIS CART GUY NOTICES WHAT I'M DOING!
ARE YOU CRAZY?
CRAZY? ME? WHY NO, I'M A BUSINESS OWNER WHO EMPLOYS SOME VERY NICE PEOPLE.
HERE... MEET MY STAFF!
THWUMMPT
OOOOMPF!
NOVA!
THUDDA-
KA-CHUNK

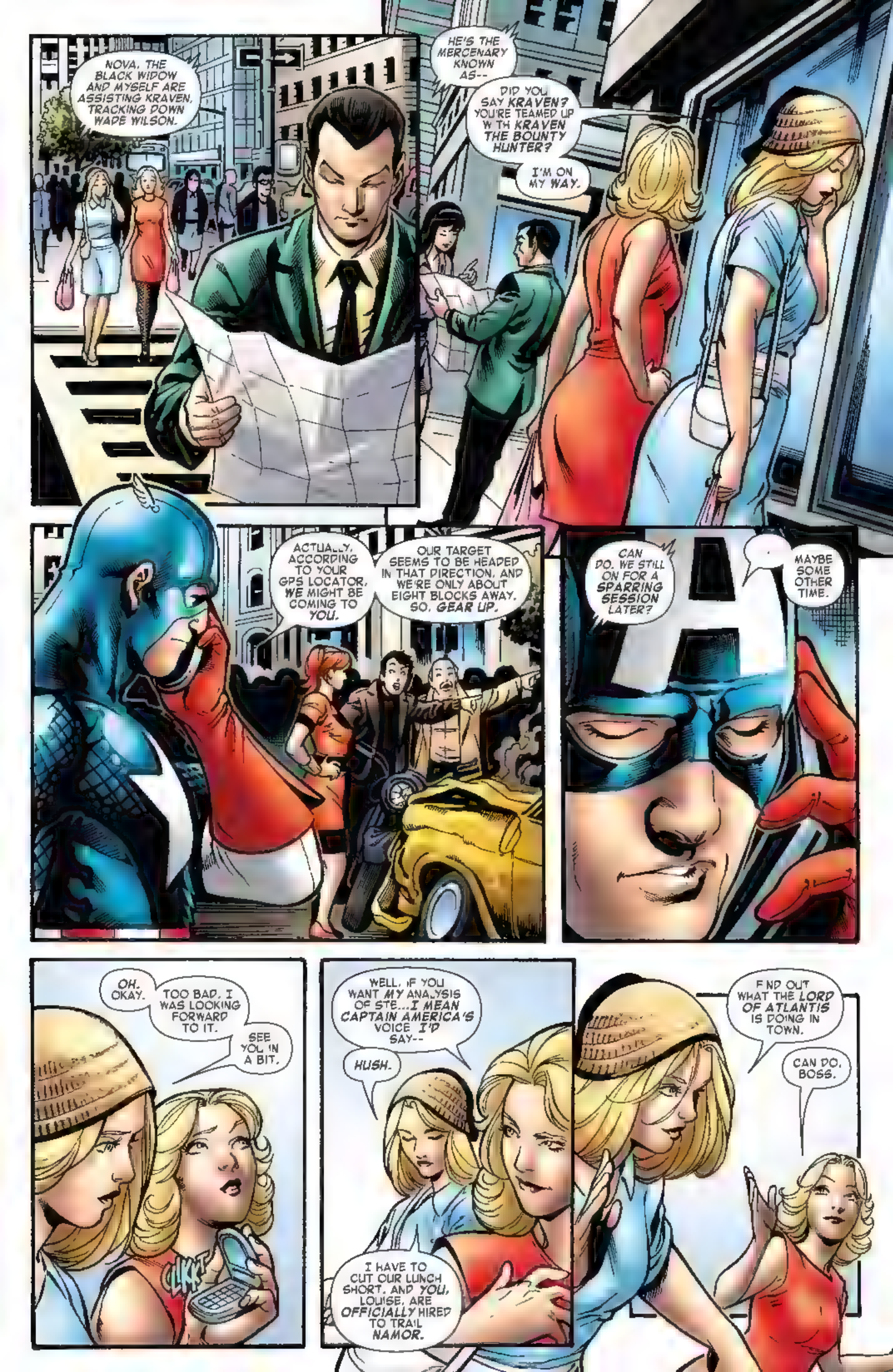

I...I THINK I'M ALL RIGHT.
GIVE ME A SECOND HERE.
HEY! CHECK OUT MY MAGIC TRICK!
NOW YOU SEE ME! AND NOW--
--I'M KICKING YOU IN THE FACE!!
KRAVEN! WHAT ARE YOU DOING?
FIRING AN ELECTRIFIED NET! IT'S THE ONLY WAY TO--
DO NOT FIRE INTO THE CROWD!
SSH-WHUMPPT
YIKES! I'M NOT READY TO SETTLE DOWN!

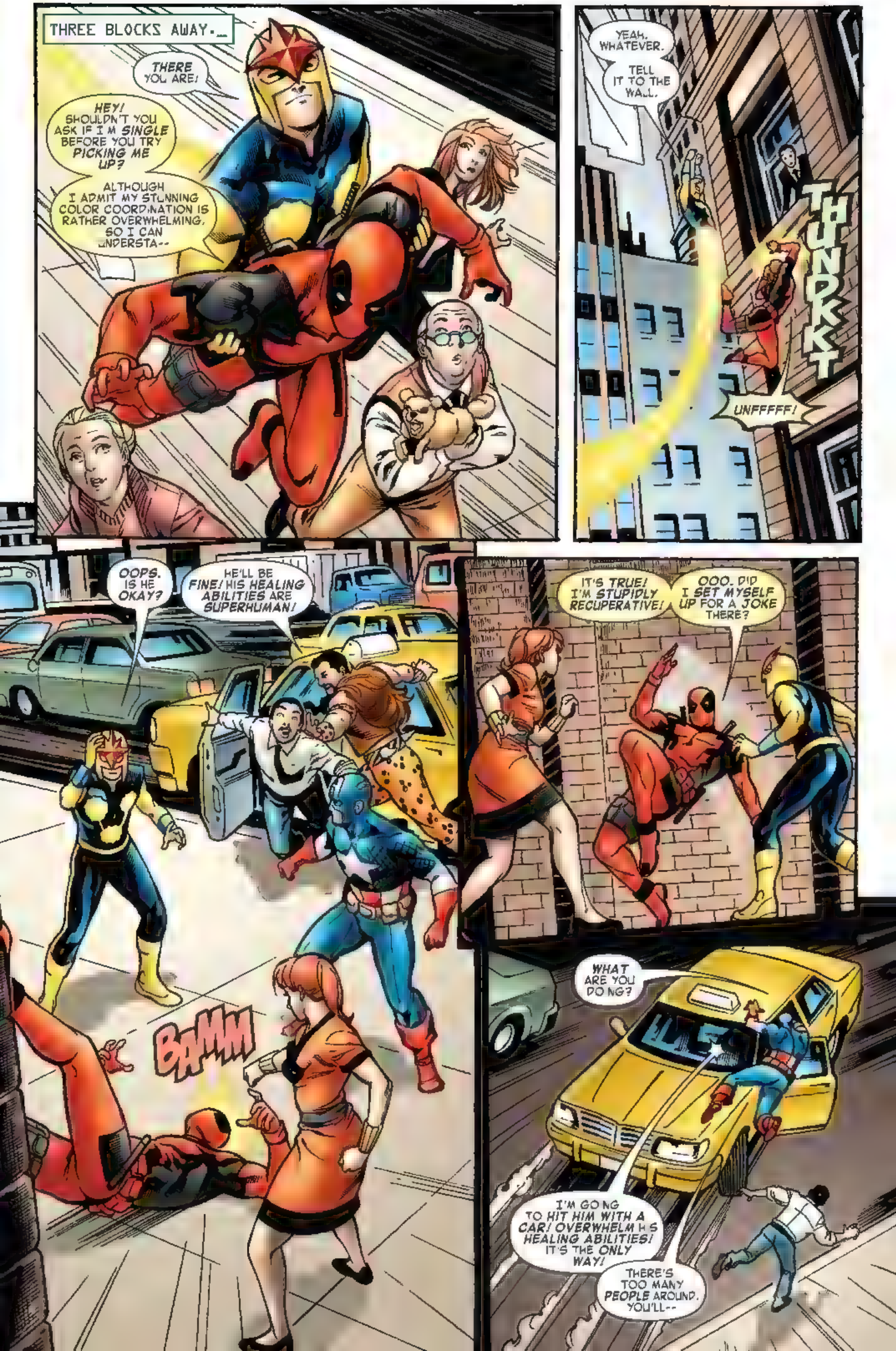

ZZZTTTZACKTTZZZZZZZT
AHHH!
AAARGGHH!
UNNHH!
NOVA! THESE PEOPLE--!
I CAN HANDLE THE ELECTRIC TY LONG ENOUGH THAT--
WHAT ARE YOU DOING? WILSON IS GETTING AWAY! LET'S GO!
WHAT WERE YOU THINKING? YOU DON'T FIRE WEAPONS INTO A CROWD! EVER!
WELL IF THEY'D BEEN SMART ENOUGH TO--
ONE MORE WORD AND I WILL HAVE THE BLACK WIDOW FIRE THAT STINGER DART INTO YOUR FOOT.
TRY TWO WORDS. MAYBE THAT WILL BE OKAY.
APOLOGIZE TO THOSE PEOPLE. I NEED TO CONTACT THOR AGAIN. I THINK HE WAS FIGHTING AGAINST A MONSTER.
BETTER'N FIGHTING WITH ONE.

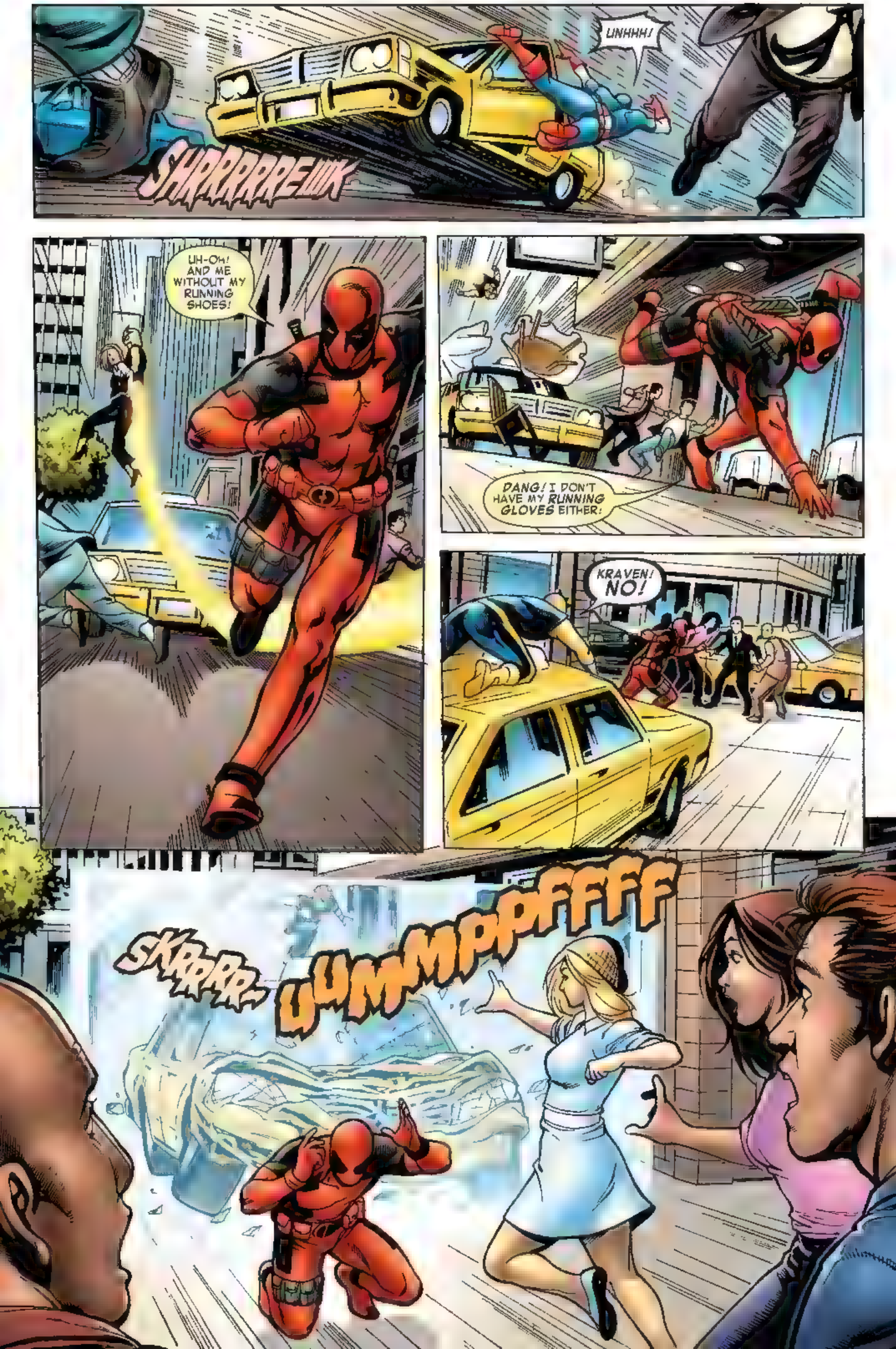

THOR... JUST BEFORE I HAD TO GO, IT SOUNDED LIKE YOU'D FOUND SOMETHING.
YES.
I FOUND THAT ONCE AGAIN THE SON OF ODIN IS AN UNMATCHED WARRIOR.
WELL...GOOD. WE HAD A FIGHT ON OUR SIDE, TOO BUT WE HAD TO ABORT AND LET THE TARGET GO.
KRAVEN ENDANGERED CIVILIAN LIVES.
THE KNAVE. WHAT THINKS THE INVISIBLE WOMAN OF THIS MISSION YOU'VE UNDERTAKEN?
GOOD QUESTION. BECAUSE, WELL... I HAVEN'T CALLED SUSAN YET.
UNWISE. CONTACT HER. INFORM HER. LEST SHE TAKE ON THE VENGEFUL ASPECT OF A VALKYRIE.
I HEAR YOU.
IT'S JUST THAT, LATELY, I FEEL...NEVER MIND. I'LL CALL HER.
YEAH. I BETTER DO THAT.

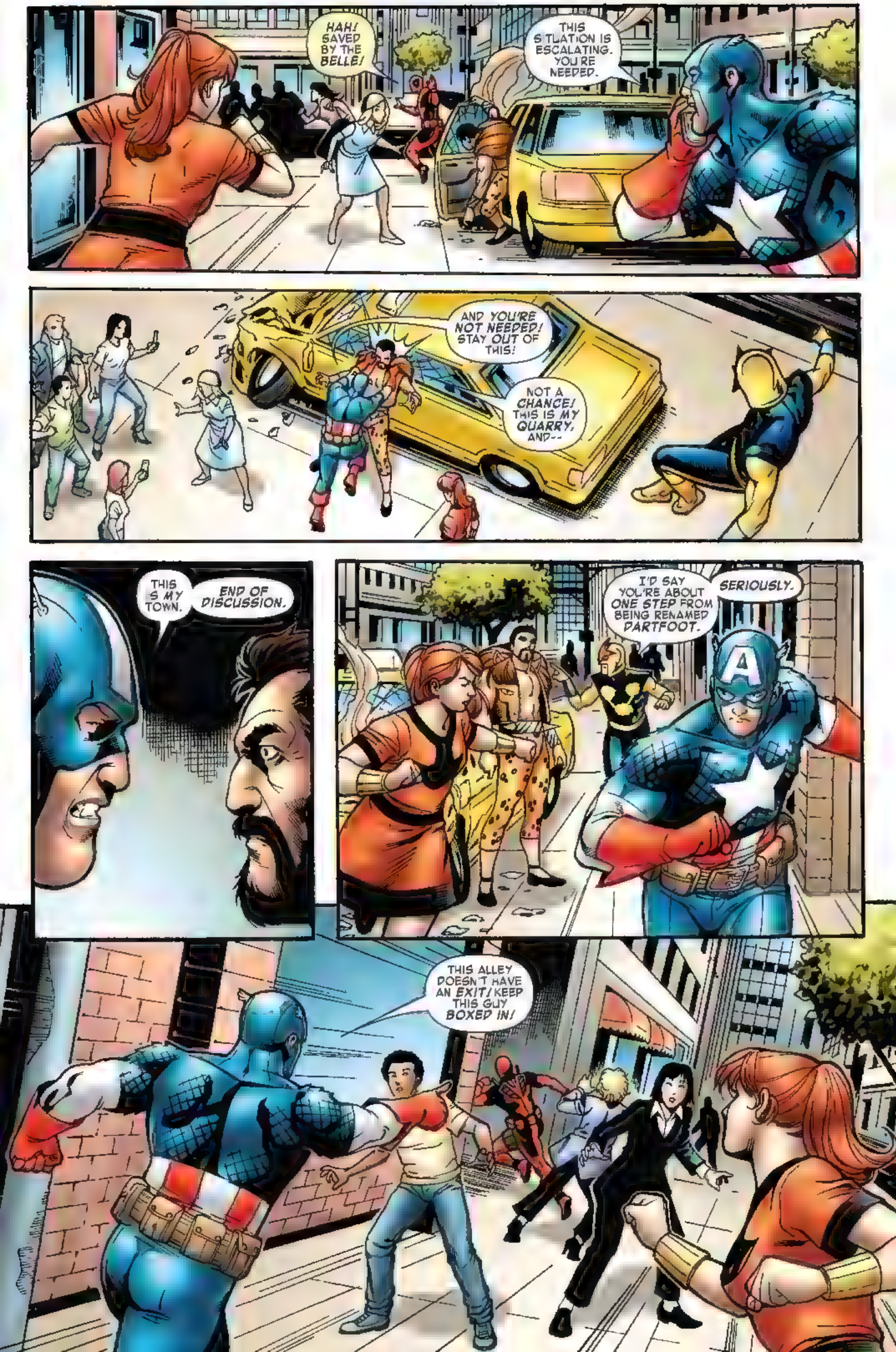

TWELVE BLOCKS FROM KRAVEN SITUATION._
SO YOU HAVE A DETECTIVE AGENCY, NOW?
A SMALL ONE, BUT WITH SOME INTERESTING PARTNERS.
LOUISE MASON: THE BLONDE PHANTOM._
SUE STORM: THE INVISIBLE WOMAN._
YOU DOING THE SUPER THING, OR JUST NORMAL INVESTIGATIONS?
WE'RE OPEN TO ANYTHING, AND I DO HAVE SOME "POWERS" ON THE PAYROLL.
HOW'S IT WORKING OUT BEING AN AVENGER?
IT'S FANTASTIC. I WON'T SAY THAT I'D GOTTEN INTO A RUT WITH THE FANTASTIC FOUR, BUT I WAS REALLY ONLY GETTING ONE PERSPECTIVE.
STEVE.. CAPTAIN AMERICA, HE'S BEEN REALLY KIND, OPENING A WHOLE NEW WORLD, AND--
Bellado
WHOA, SUE! STOP. IT SOUNDS LIKE YOU'RE GOING INTO ROMANCE TALK.
WITH STEVE? NEVER. WE'RE FRIENDS. AND REED IS THE ONLY MAN WHO COULD EVER--
EVER--
KINDA PAUSED THERE IN MID-SENTENCE, GIRL. AND YOU EVEN WENT A LITTLE INVISIBLE.
DID I STRIKE A CHORD WITH THAT ROMANCE JOKE?
NO, IT'S NOT THAT, I--

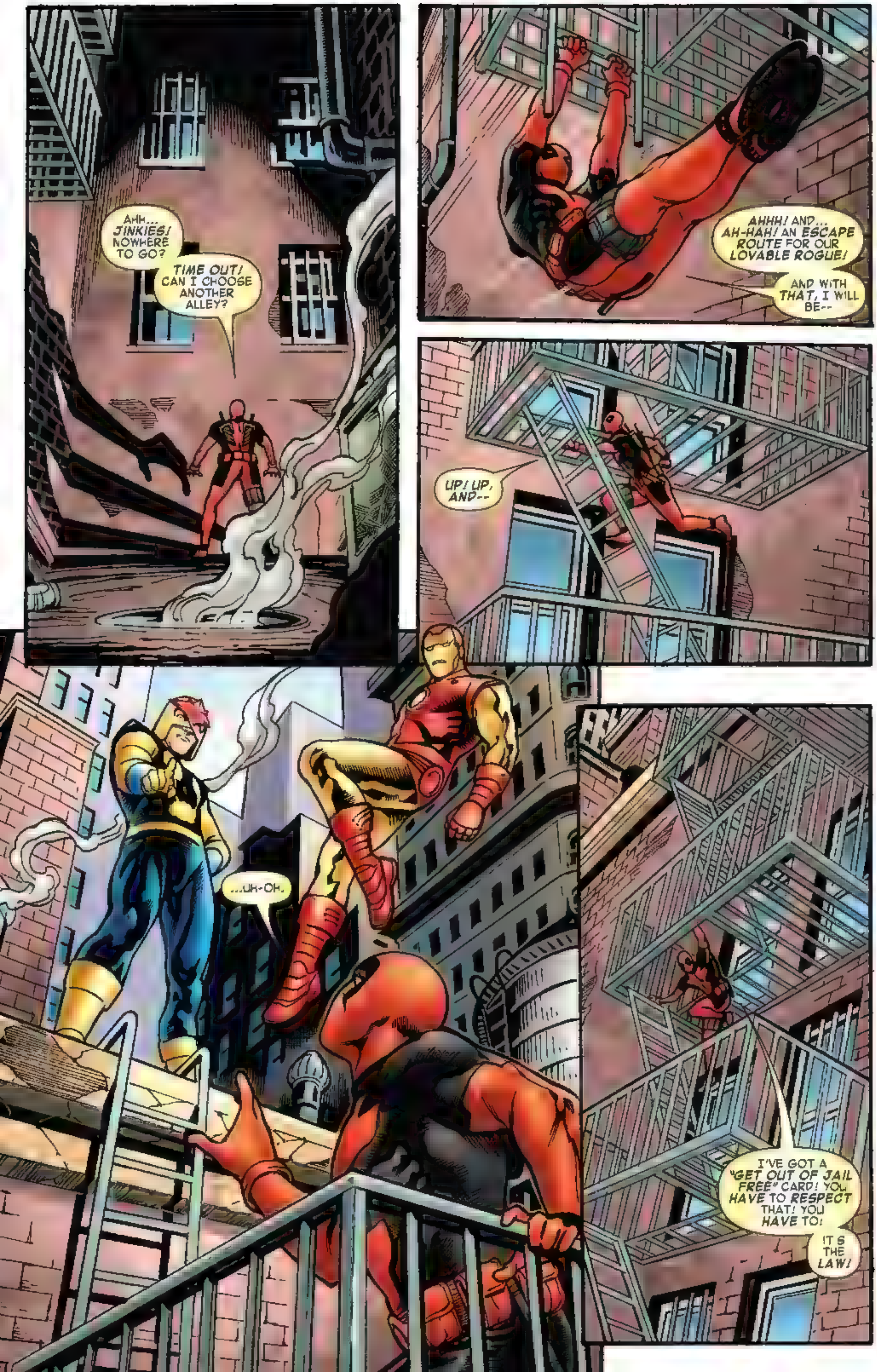

I THINK THAT WAS *NAMOR* THAT JUST WALKED PAST.
THE *SUB-MARINER?*
YOU *KIDDING?* WHY WOULD *HE* BE IN NEW YORK?
HE HAS SOME BUSINESS VENTURES IN THE CITY. IT'S *PROBABLY* JUST THAT.
EXCEPT... HE *ALWAYS* CALLS WHEN HE'S IN TOWN.
WELL, MAYBE HE WAS JUST TOO *BUSY* THIS TIME AND--
NO. I MEAN... HE *ALWAYS* CALLS.
OH. *THAT* KIND OF *"HE ALWAYS CALLS."* RIGHT.
WELL, *HERE'S* A *STRANGE* IDEA. YOU *COULD* WALK RIGHT UP TO HIM AND *ASK* HIM WHY HE'S IN TOWN.
I COULD *DO* THAT. I *COULD*.
BUT... SOUNDS LIKE YOU DON'T *WANT* TO.
NO. HE'S *VERY* SECRETIVE. AND IF I ASK HIM, HE'LL JUST *MAKE SOMETHING UP*, EVEN IF HE'S IN TOWN FOR *COMPLETELY* INNOCENT REASONS.
ANY *MIND READERS* ON THE STAFF OF YOUR *DETECTIVE AGENCY?*
NONE THAT WOULD WANT TO MESS WITH THE *SUB-MARINER*. THAT GUY IS *TEMPERAMENTAL*. WHAT I *COULD* DO IS--
BEEPO BEEPO
HOLD ON. I'M GETTING A CALL.
SUSAN HERE.
IT'S STE-- CAPTAIN AMERICA, HERE.

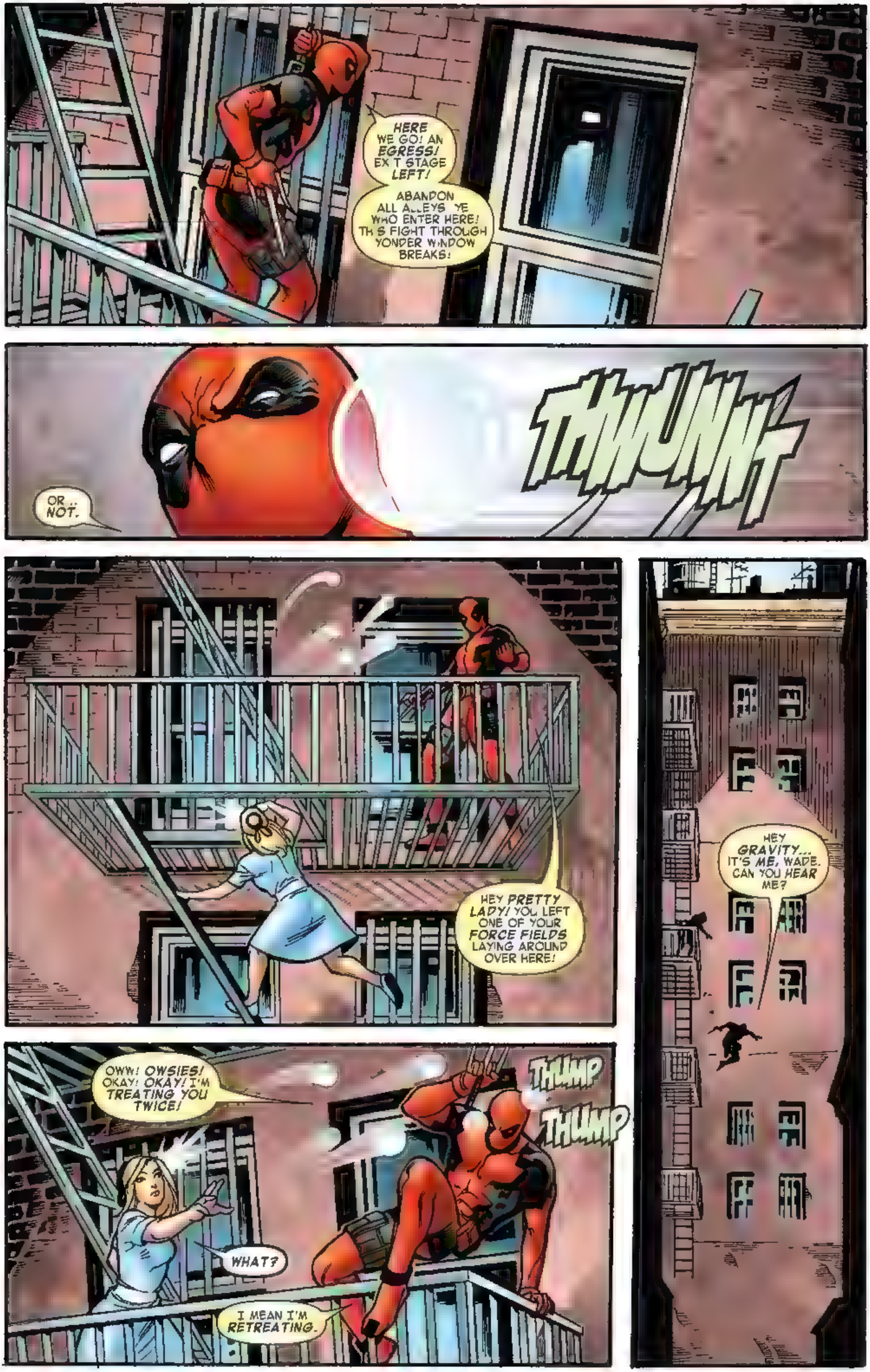

NOVA, THE BLACK WIDOW AND MYSELF ARE ASSISTING KRAVEN, TRACKING DOWN WADE WILSON.
HE'S THE MERCENARY KNOWN AS--
DID YOU SAY *KRAVEN*? YOU'RE TEAMED UP WITH *KRAVEN THE BOUNTY HUNTER?*
I'M ON MY *WAY.*
ACTUALLY, ACCORDING TO YOUR GPS LOCATOR, *WE* MIGHT BE COMING TO *YOU.*
OUR TARGET SEEMS TO BE HEADED IN THAT DIRECTION, AND WE'RE ONLY ABOUT EIGHT BLOCKS AWAY. SO, *GEAR UP.*
CAN DO. WE STILL ON FOR A *SPARRING SESSION* LATER?
MAYBE SOME OTHER TIME.
OH. OKAY.
TOO BAD. I WAS LOOKING FORWARD TO IT.
SEE YOU IN A BIT.
CLIKK
WELL, IF YOU WANT *MY* ANALYSIS OF STE...*I MEAN CAPTAIN AMERICA'S* VOICE *I'D* SAY--
HUSH.
I HAVE TO CUT OUR LUNCH SHORT. AND *YOU,* LOUISE, ARE *OFFICIALLY* HIRED TO TRAIL *NAMOR.*
FIND OUT WHAT THE *LORD OF ATLANTIS* IS DOING IN TOWN.
CAN DO, BOSS.

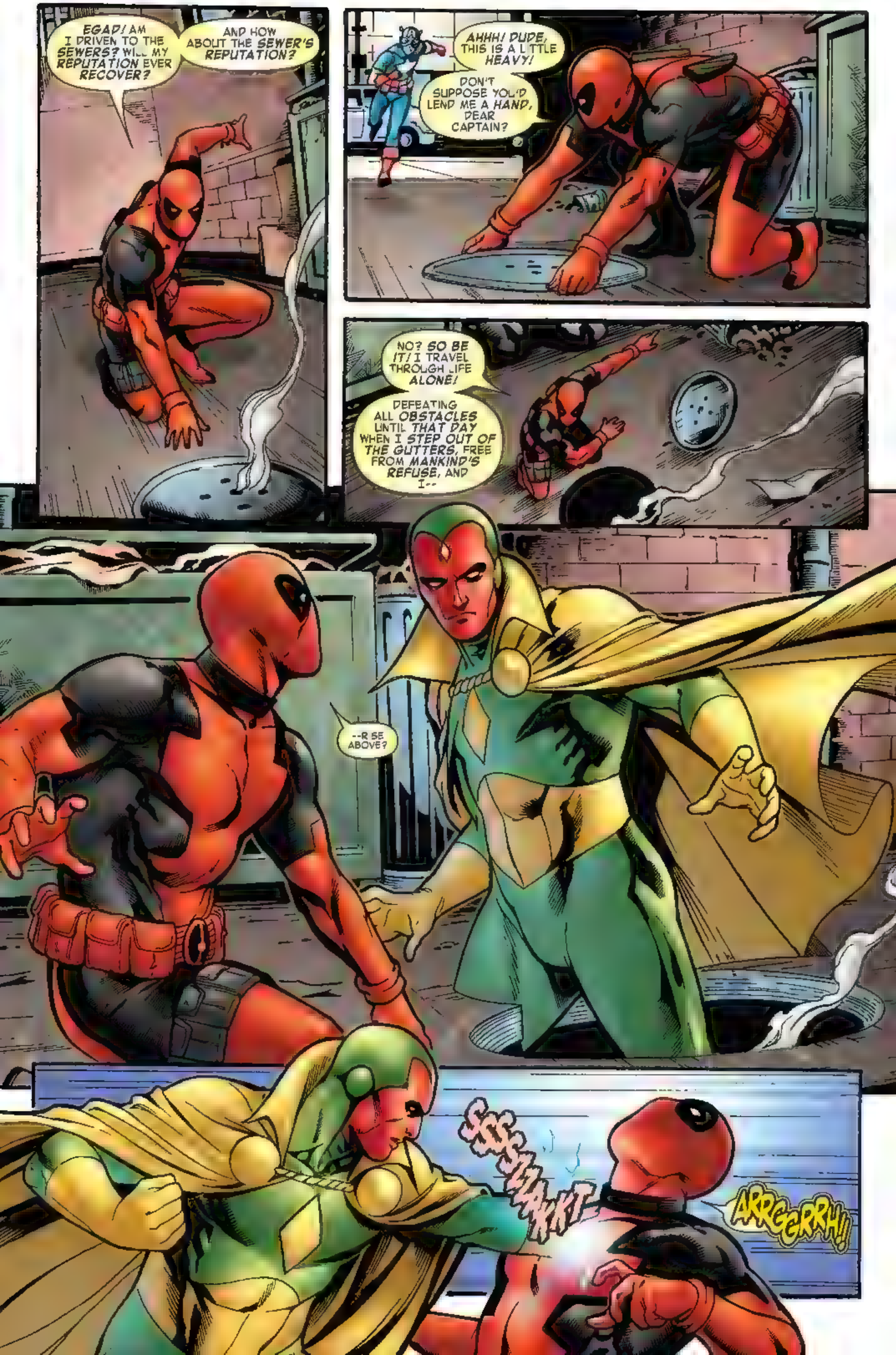

THREE BLOCKS AWAY...
THERE YOU ARE!
HEY! SHOULDN'T YOU ASK IF I'M SINGLE BEFORE YOU TRY PICKING ME UP?
ALTHOUGH I ADMIT MY STUNNING COLOR COORDINATION IS RATHER OVERWHELMING, SO I CAN UNDERSTA--
YEAH. WHATEVER.
TELL IT TO THE WALL.
THUNDKT
UNFFFFF!
OOPS. IS HE OKAY?
HE'LL BE FINE! HIS HEALING ABILITIES ARE SUPERHUMAN!
BAMM
IT'S TRUE! I'M STUPIDLY RECUPERATIVE!
OOO. DID I SET MYSELF UP FOR A JOKE THERE?
WHAT ARE YOU DOING?
I'M GOING TO HIT HIM WITH A CAR! OVERWHELM HIS HEALING ABILITIES! IT'S THE ONLY WAY!
THERE'S TOO MANY PEOPLE AROUND. YOU'LL--

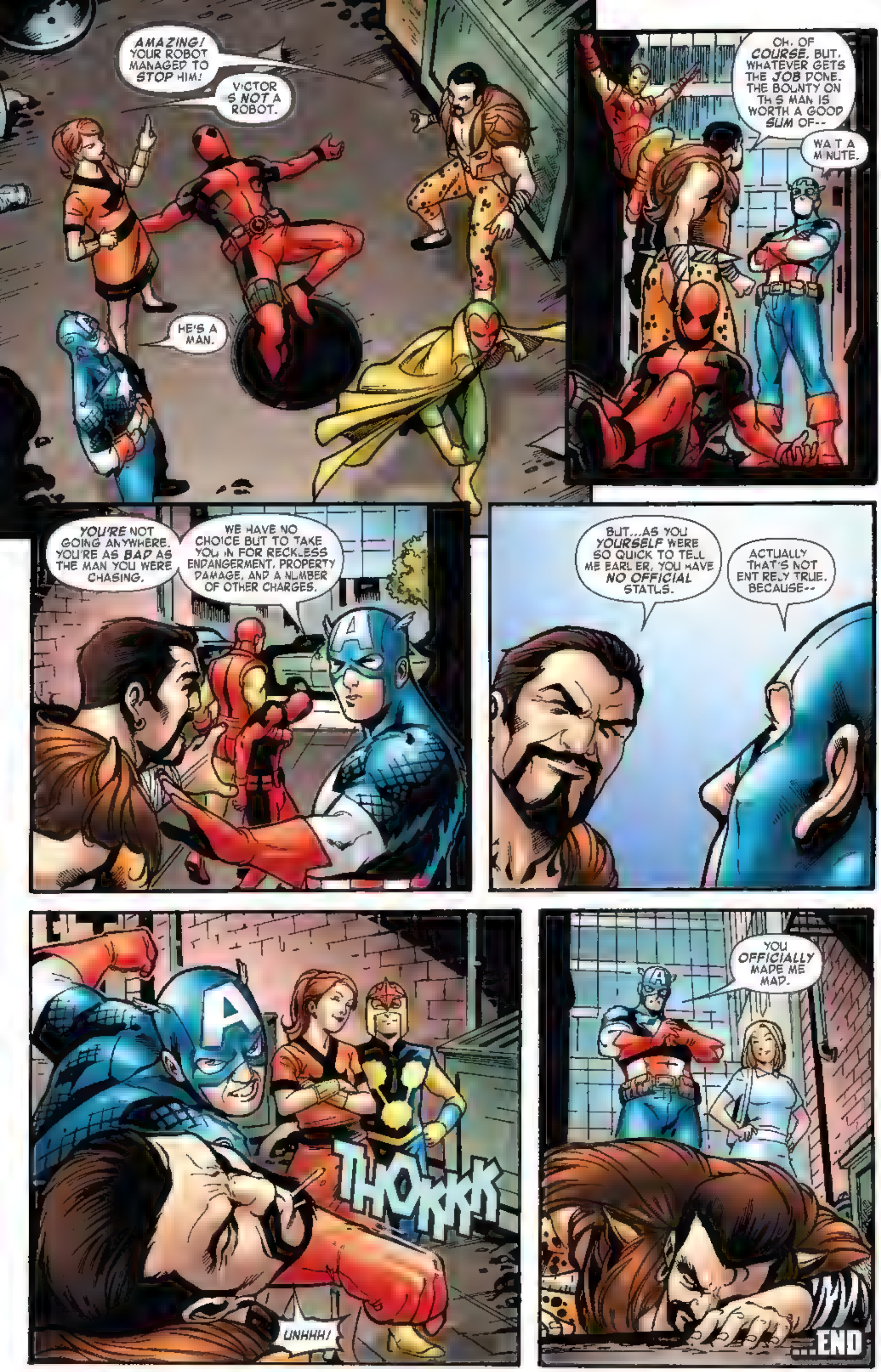

UNHHH!
SHRRRRREUUK
UH-OH! AND ME WITHOUT MY RUNNING SHOES!
DANG! I DON'T HAVE MY RUNNING GLOVES EITHER!
KRAVEN! NO!
SKRRRR-
UUMMMPPFFFF


HAH! SAVED BY THE *BELLE!*
THIS SITUATION IS ESCALATING. YOU'RE NEEDED.
AND *YOU'RE NOT NEEDED!* STAY OUT OF THIS!
NOT A *CHANCE!* THIS IS *MY QUARRY,* AND--
THIS IS *MY* TOWN.
END OF DISCUSSION.
I'D SAY YOU'RE ABOUT *ONE STEP* FROM BEING RENAMED *DARTFOOT.*
SERIOUSLY.
THIS ALLEY DOESN'T HAVE AN *EXIT!* KEEP THIS GUY *BOXED IN!*

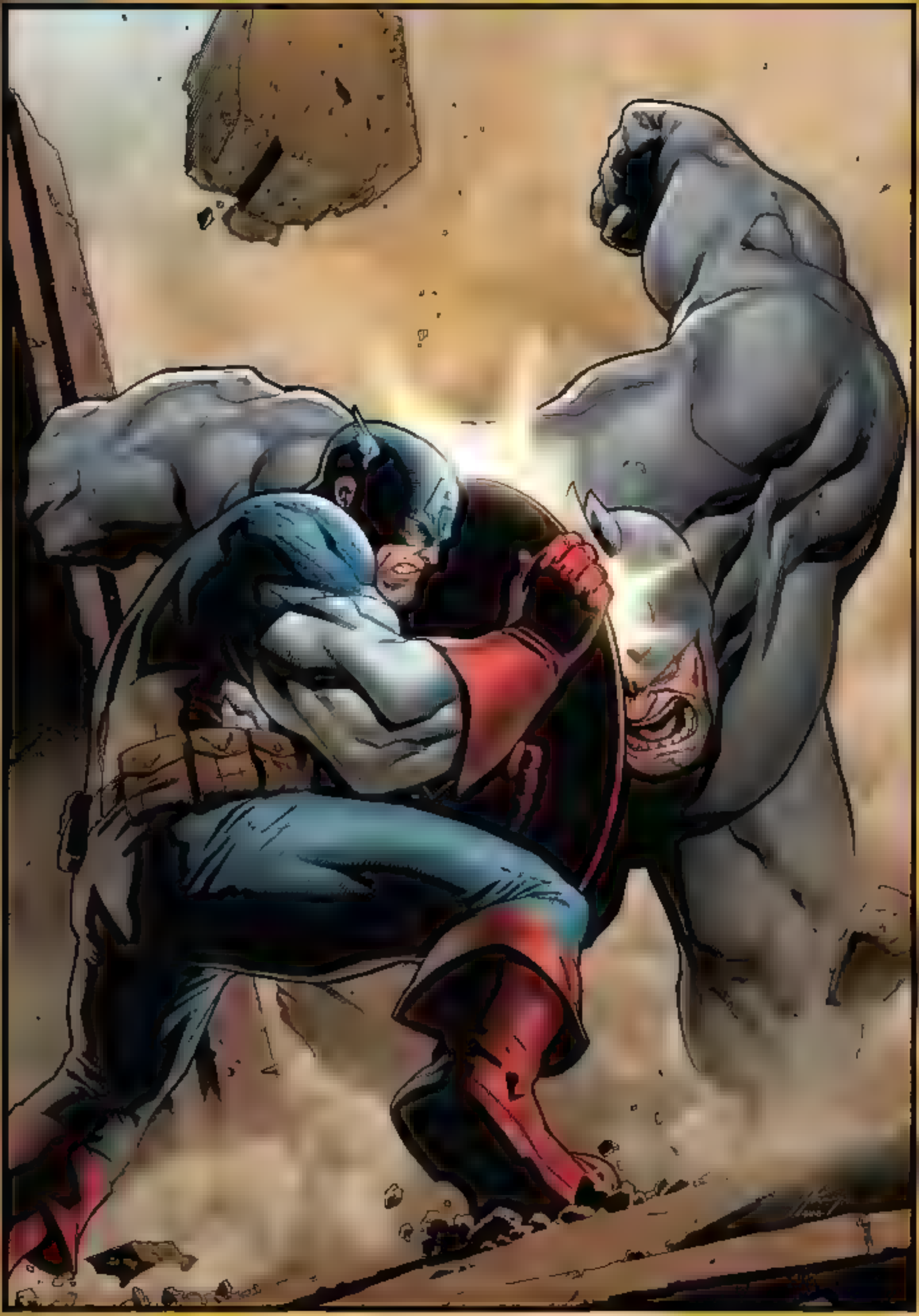

AHH... JINKIES! NOWHERE TO GO?
TIME OUT! CAN I CHOOSE ANOTHER ALLEY?
AHHH! AND... AH-HAH! AN ESCAPE ROUTE FOR OUR LOVABLE ROGUE!
AND WITH THAT, I WILL BE--
UP! UP, AND--
...UH-OH.
I'VE GOT A "GET OUT OF JAIL FREE" CARD! YOU HAVE TO RESPECT THAT! YOU HAVE TO!
IT'S THE LAW!


HERE WE GO! AN EGRESS! EXIT STAGE LEFT!
ABANDON ALL ALLEYS YE WHO ENTER HERE! THIS FIGHT THROUGH YONDER WINDOW BREAKS!
OR.. NOT.
THWUNNT
HEY PRETTY LADY! YOU LEFT ONE OF YOUR FORCE FIELDS LAYING AROUND OVER HERE!
OWW! OWSIES! OKAY! OKAY! I'M TREATING YOU TWICE!
THUMP
THUMP
WHAT?
I MEAN I'M RETREATING.
HEY GRAVITY... IT'S ME, WADE. CAN YOU HEAR ME?

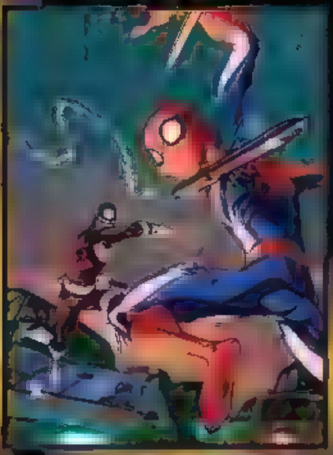

EGAD! AM I DRIVEN TO THE SEWERS? WILL MY REPUTATION EVER RECOVER?
AND HOW ABOUT THE SEWER'S REPUTATION?
AHHH! DUDE, THIS IS A LITTLE HEAVY!
DON'T SUPPOSE YOU'D LEND ME A HAND, DEAR CAPTAIN?
NO? SO BE IT! I TRAVEL THROUGH LIFE ALONE!
DEFEATING ALL OBSTACLES UNTIL THAT DAY WHEN I STEP OUT OF THE GUTTERS, FREE FROM MANKIND'S REFUSE, AND I--
--R SE ABOVE?
SSSSZAKKT
ARRGGRRH!!


AMAZING! YOUR ROBOT MANAGED TO STOP HIM!
VICTOR IS NOT A ROBOT.
HE'S A MAN.
OH, OF COURSE. BUT, WHATEVER GETS THE JOB DONE. THE BOUNTY ON THIS MAN IS WORTH A GOOD SUM OF--
WAIT A MINUTE.
YOU'RE NOT GOING ANYWHERE. YOU'RE AS BAD AS THE MAN YOU WERE CHASING.
WE HAVE NO CHOICE BUT TO TAKE YOU IN FOR RECKLESS ENDANGERMENT, PROPERTY DAMAGE, AND A NUMBER OF OTHER CHARGES.
BUT...AS YOU YOURSELF WERE SO QUICK TO TELL ME EARLIER, YOU HAVE NO OFFICIAL STATUS.
ACTUALLY THAT'S NOT ENTIRELY TRUE. BECAUSE--
THOKKK
UNHHH!
YOU OFFICIALLY MADE ME MAD.
...END

NEXT ISSUE!

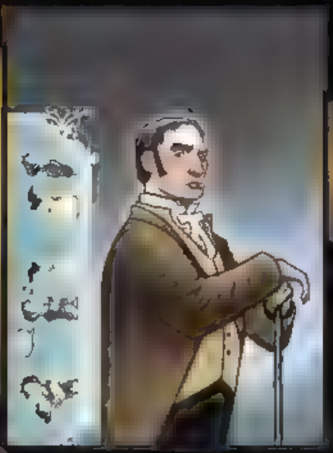


DON'T MISS...



SPIDER-MAN #4

THOR
THE MIGHTY AVENGER 2



SENSE
AND SENSIBILITY #3

PAUL TOBIN
WRITER

RONAN CLIQUET
PENCILER

AMILTON SANTOS
INKER

SOTOCOLOR
COLORIST

DAVE SHARPE
LETTERER

CLAYTON HENRY & BRAD ANDERSON
COVER

DAMIEN LUCCHESE
PRODUCTION

MICHAEL HORWITZ
ASSISTANT EDITOR

NATHAN COSBY
EDITOR

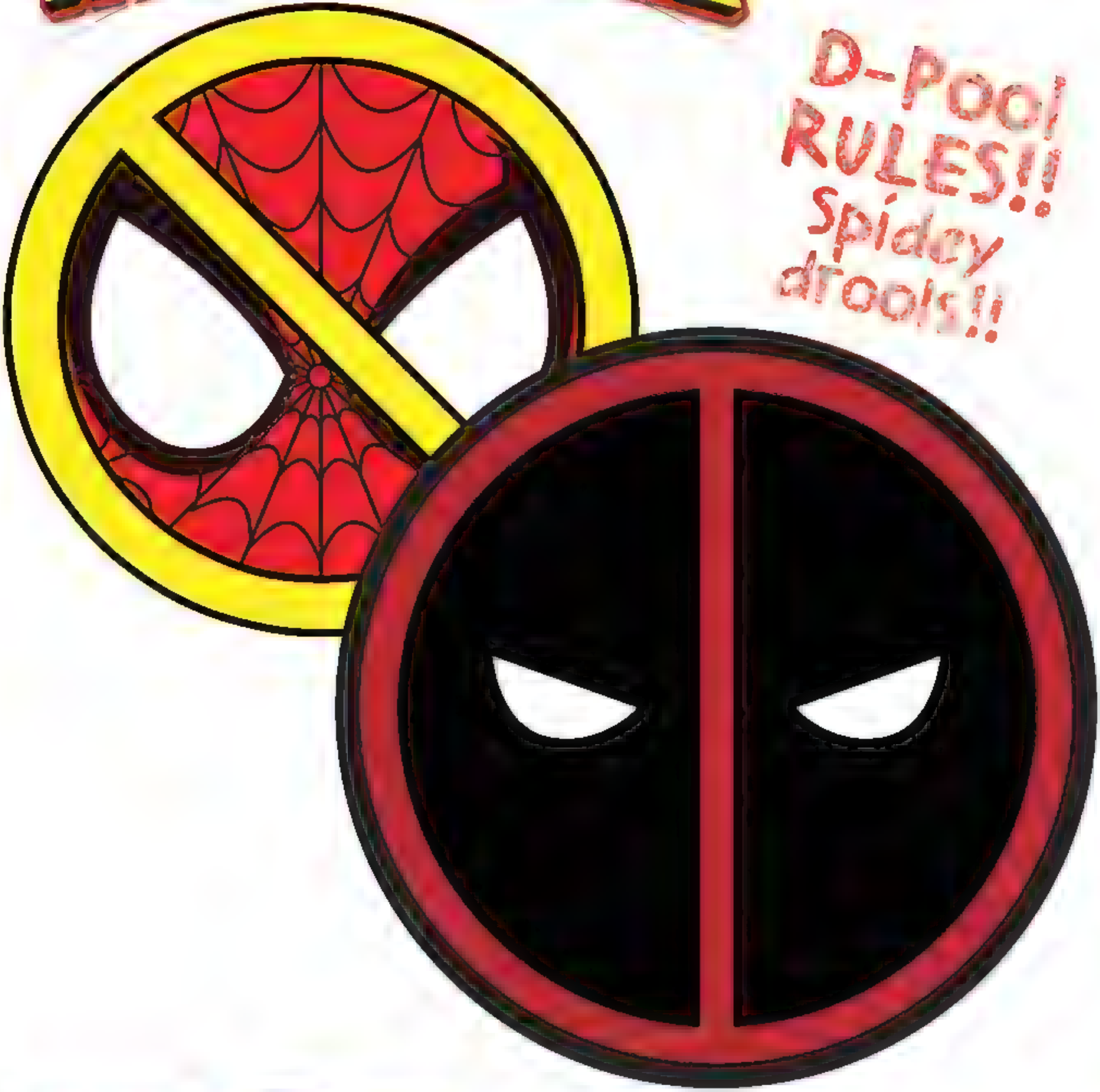
JOE QUESADA
EDITOR IN CHIEF

DAN BUCKLEY
PUBLISHER

ALAN FINE
EXECUTIVE PRODUCER

MARVEL

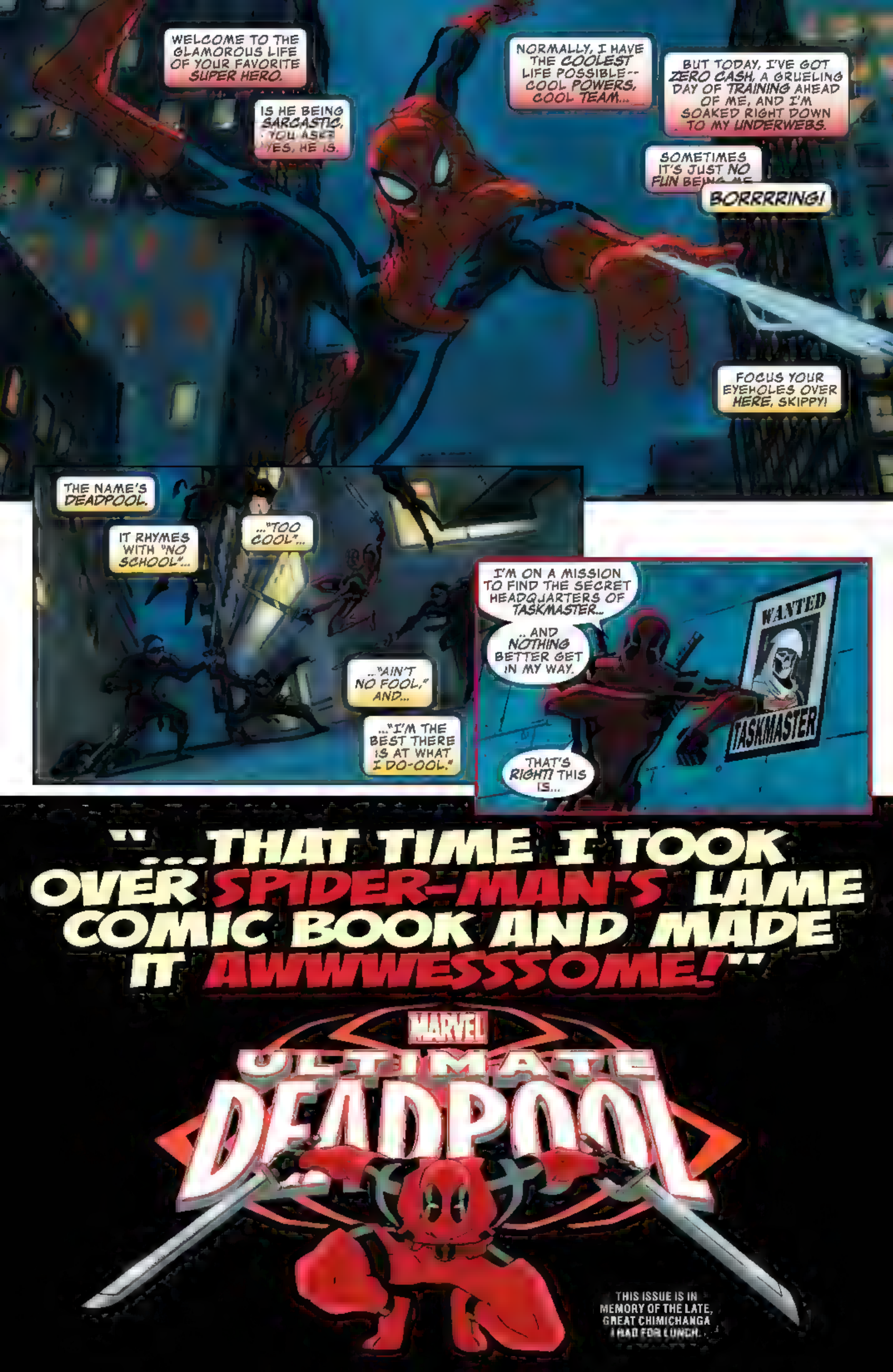
ULTIMATE ~~SPIDER-MAN~~ DEADPOOL WEB-WARRIORS


D-Pool RULES!!
Spidey drools!!

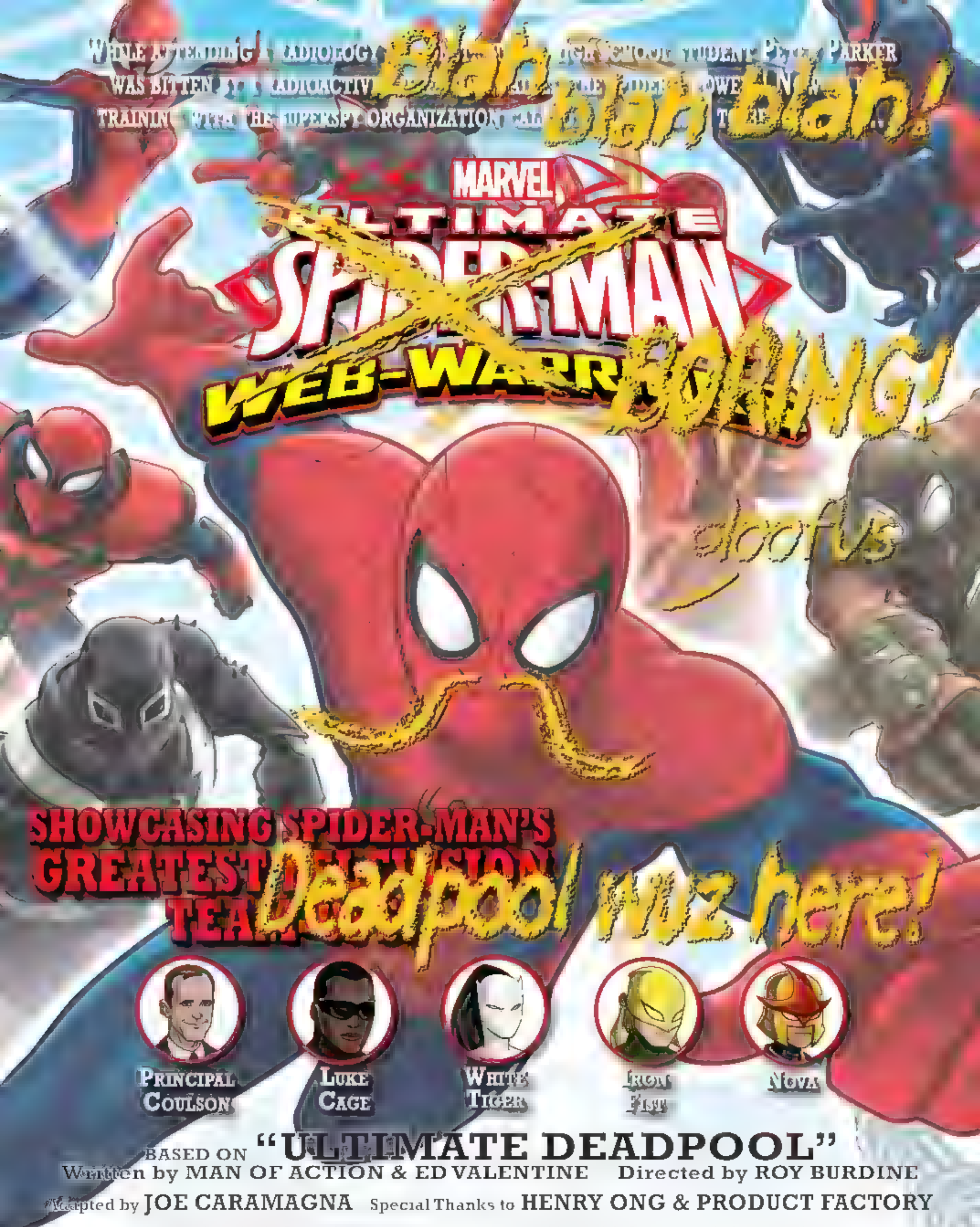
MARVEL ON Disney XD Watch the hit TV series SUNDAY MORNINGS!

SHARE YOUR UNIVERSE

008


WELCOME TO THE GLAMOROUS LIFE OF YOUR FAVORITE SUPER HERO.
IS HE BEING SARCASTIC, YOU ASK? YES, HE IS.
NORMALLY, I HAVE THE COOLEST LIFE POSSIBLE-- COOL POWERS, COOL TEAM...
BUT TODAY, I'VE GOT ZERO CASH, A GRUELING DAY OF TRAINING AHEAD OF ME, AND I'M SOAKED RIGHT DOWN TO MY UNDERWEBS.
SOMETIMES IT'S JUST NO FUN BEING
BORRRRING!
FOCUS YOUR EYEHOLES OVER HERE, SKIPPY!
THE NAME'S DEADPOOL.
IT RHYMES WITH "NO SCHOOL"...
..."TOO COOL"...
..."AIN'T NO FOOL," AND...
..."I'M THE BEST THERE IS AT WHAT I DO-OOL."
I'M ON A MISSION TO FIND THE SECRET HEADQUARTERS OF TASKMASTER...
...AND NOTHING BETTER GET IN MY WAY.
WANTED
TASKMASTER
THAT'S RIGHT! THIS IS...
"...THAT TIME I TOOK OVER SPIDER-MAN'S LAME COMIC BOOK AND MADE IT AWWWESSSOME!"
MARVEL
ULTIMATE DEADPOOL
THIS ISSUE IS IN MEMORY OF THE LATE, GREAT CHIMICHANGA I HAD FOR LUNCH.

While attending a radiology [illegible] high school student Peter Parker was bitten by a radioactive [illegible] the spider's powers. Now [illegible] training with the superspy organization called [illegible]


Blah blah blah!
MARVEL
~~ULTIMATE SPIDER-MAN~~
WEB-WARR
BORING!
doofus
SHOWCASING SPIDER-MAN'S GREATEST [illegible] TEA
Deadpool wuz here!
PRINCIPAL COULSON
LUKE CAGE
WHITE TIGER
IRON FIST
NOVA

BASED ON

"ULTIMATE DEADPOOL"

Written by MAN OF ACTION & ED VALENTINE Directed by ROY BURDINE

Adapted by JOE CARAMAGNA Special Thanks to HENRY ONG & PRODUCT FACTORY

SEBASTIAN GIRNER editor MARK BASSO consulting editor
MARK PANICCIA senior editor
AXEL ALONSO editor in chief JOE QUESADA chief creative officer
DAN BUCKLEY publisher ALAN FINE executive producer
Spider-Man created by STAN LEE & STEVE DITKO

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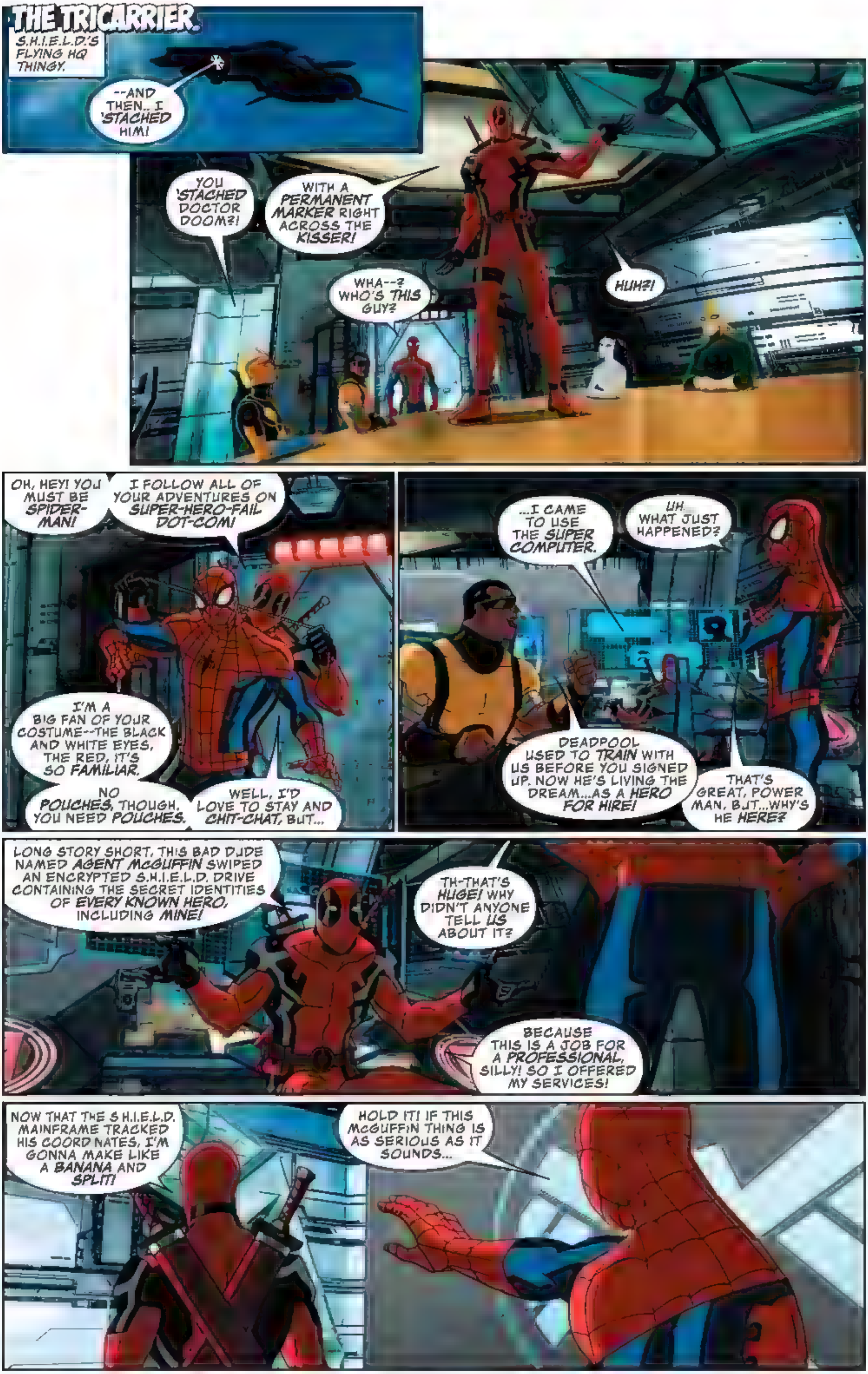
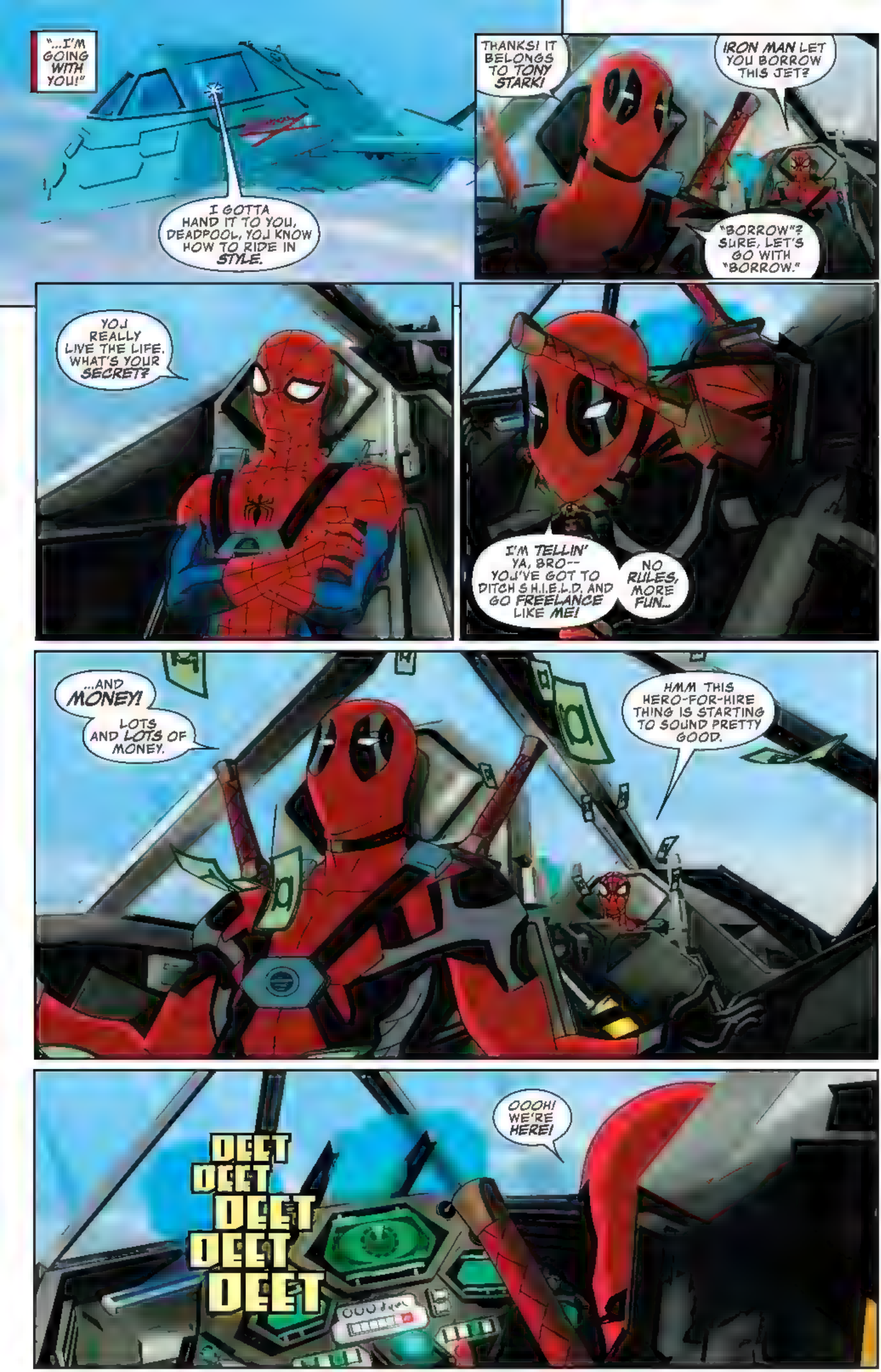
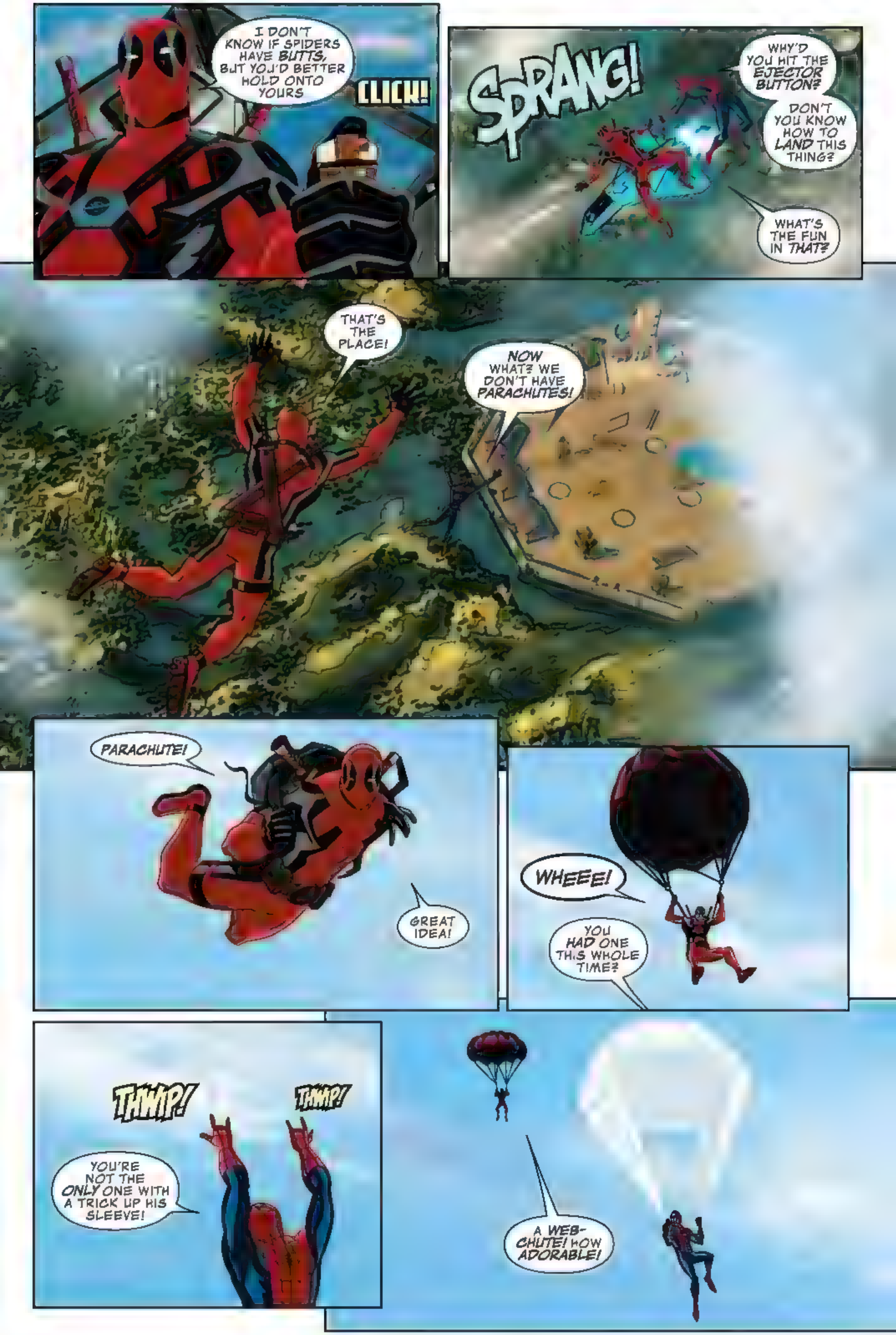
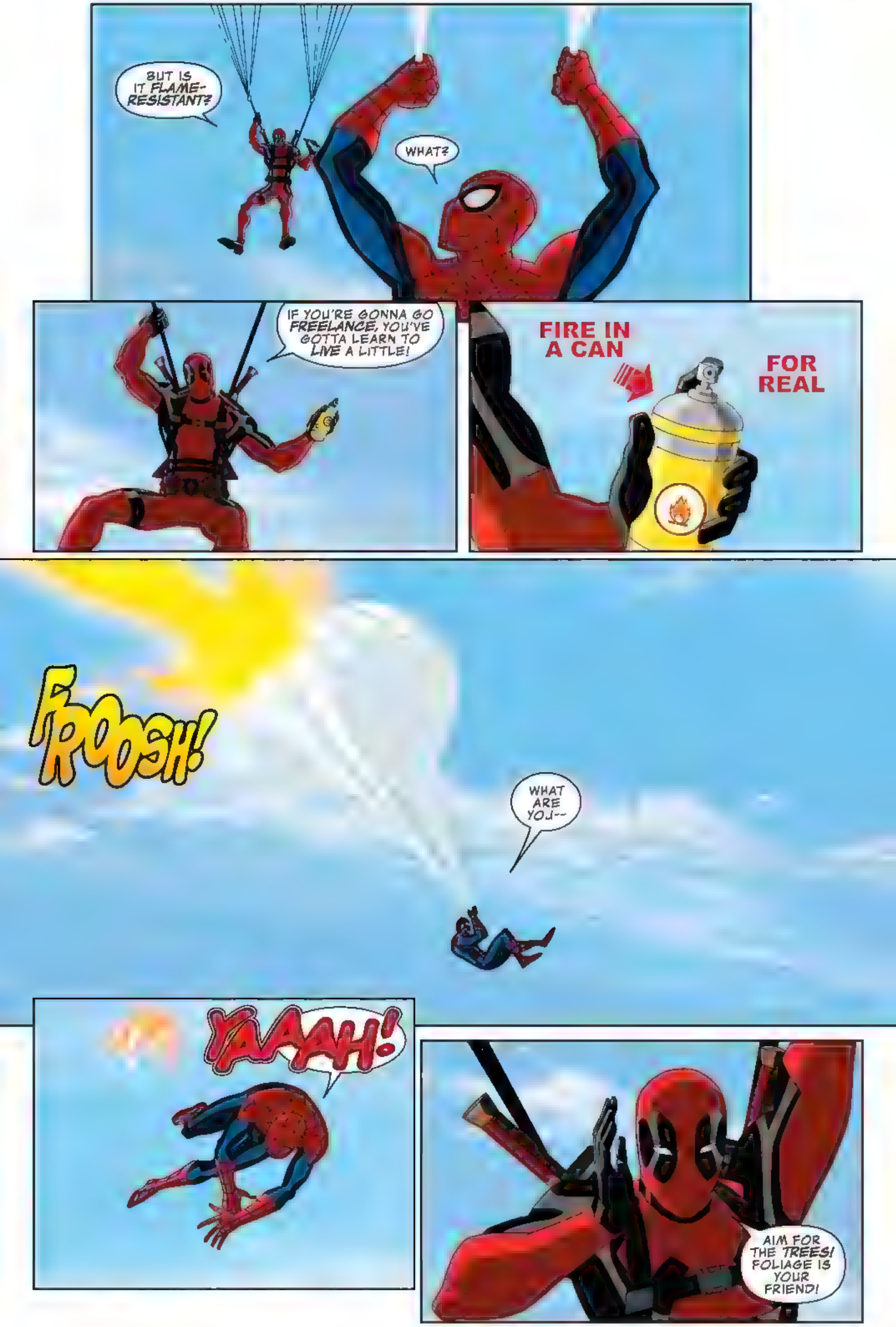
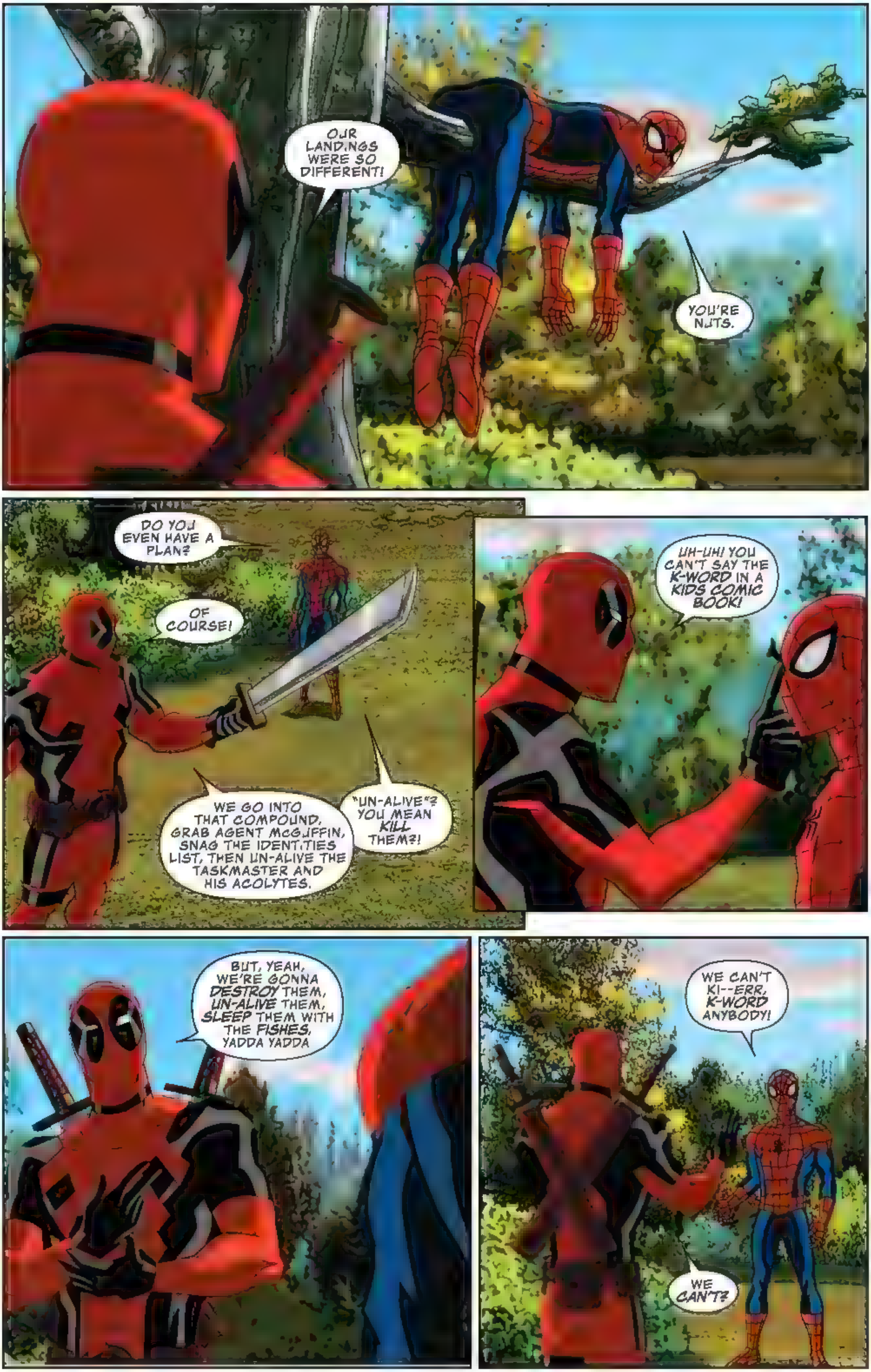
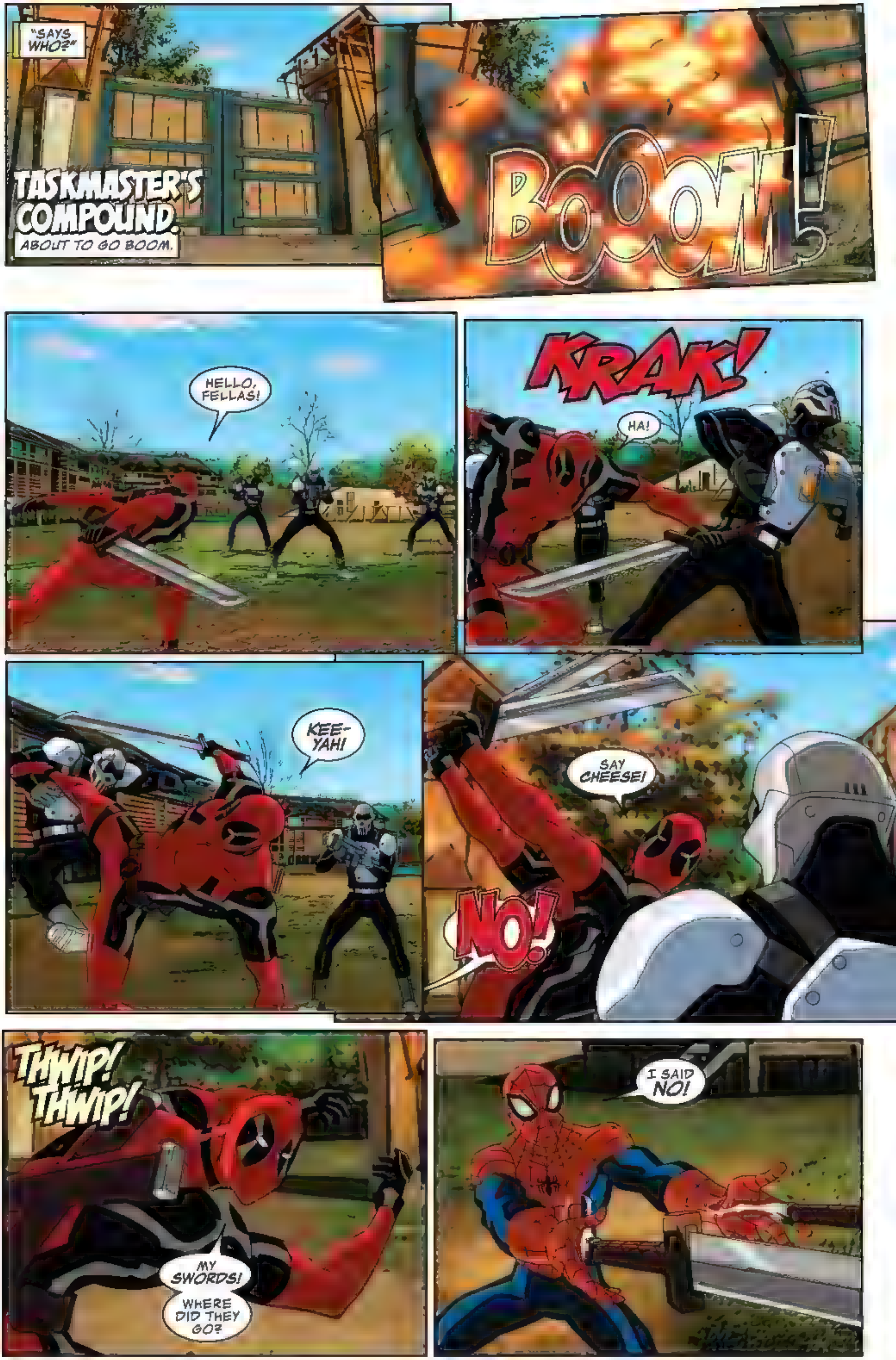

THE TRICARRIER.
S.H.I.E.L.D.'S FLYING HQ THINGY.
--AND THEN... I 'STACHED HIM!
YOU 'STACHED DOCTOR DOOM?!
WITH A PERMANENT MARKER RIGHT ACROSS THE KISSER!
WHA--? WHO'S THIS GUY?
HUH?!
OH, HEY! YOU MUST BE SPIDER-MAN!
I FOLLOW ALL OF YOUR ADVENTURES ON SUPER-HERO-FAIL DOT-COM!
I'M A BIG FAN OF YOUR COSTUME--THE BLACK AND WHITE EYES, THE RED, IT'S SO FAMILIAR.
NO POUCHES, THOUGH. YOU NEED POUCHES.
WELL, I'D LOVE TO STAY AND CHIT-CHAT, BUT...
...I CAME TO USE THE SUPER COMPUTER.
UH, WHAT JUST HAPPENED?
DEADPOOL USED TO TRAIN WITH US BEFORE YOU SIGNED UP. NOW HE'S LIVING THE DREAM...AS A HERO FOR HIRE!
THAT'S GREAT, POWER MAN, BUT...WHY'S HE HERE?
LONG STORY SHORT, THIS BAD DUDE NAMED AGENT McGUFFIN SWIPED AN ENCRYPTED S.H.I.E.L.D. DRIVE CONTAINING THE SECRET IDENTITIES OF EVERY KNOWN HERO, INCLUDING MINE!
TH-THAT'S HUGE! WHY DIDN'T ANYONE TELL US ABOUT IT?
BECAUSE THIS IS A JOB FOR A PROFESSIONAL, SILLY! SO I OFFERED MY SERVICES!
NOW THAT THE S.H.I.E.L.D. MAINFRAME TRACKED HIS COORDINATES, I'M GONNA MAKE LIKE A BANANA AND SPLIT!
HOLD IT! IF THIS McGUFFIN THING IS AS SERIOUS AS IT SOUNDS...

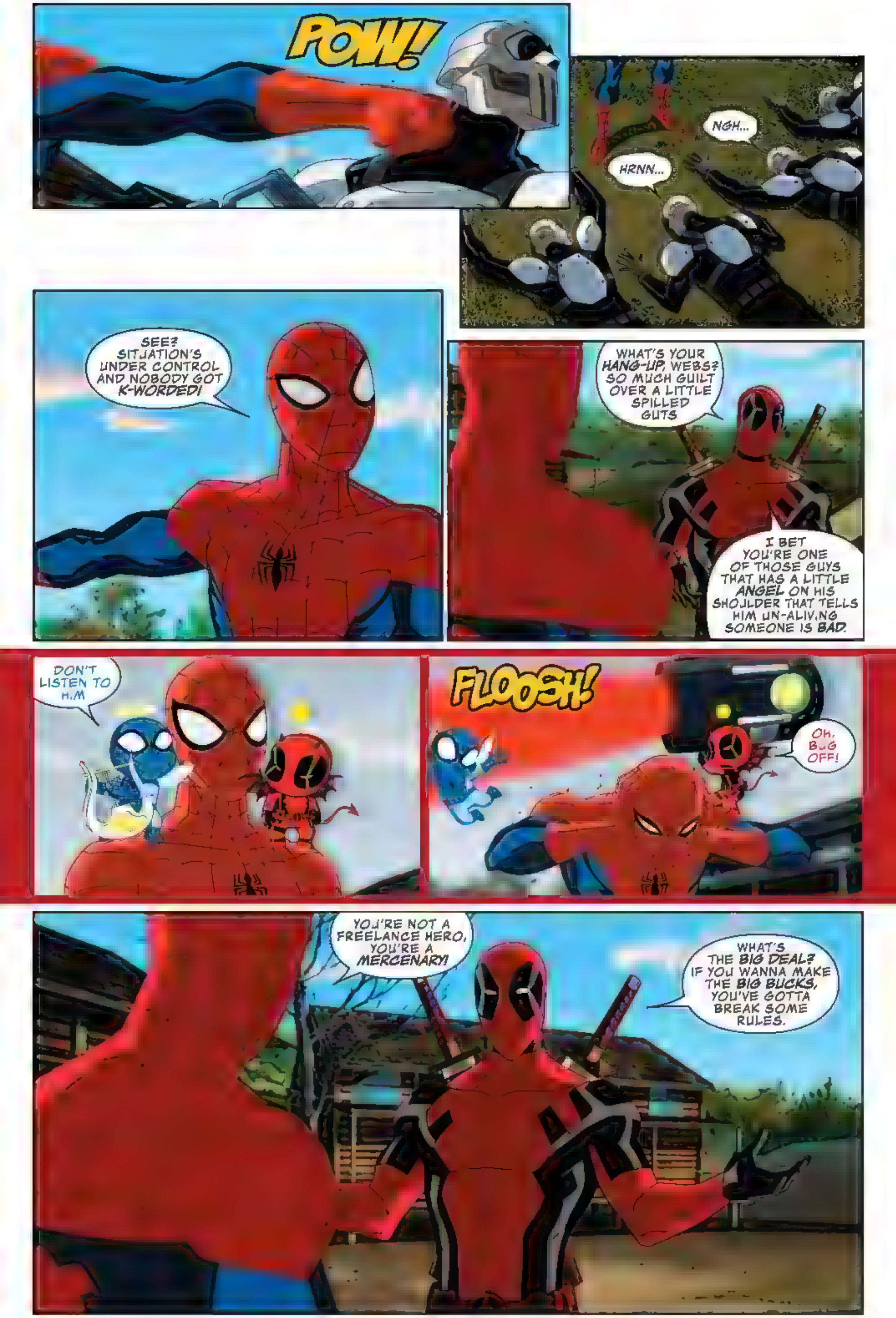

"...I'M GOING WITH YOU!"
I GOTTA HAND IT TO YOU, DEADPOOL, YOU KNOW HOW TO RIDE IN *STYLE.*
THANKS! IT BELONGS TO *TONY STARK!*
IRON MAN LET YOU BORROW THIS JET?
"BORROW"? SURE, LET'S GO WITH "BORROW."
YOU REALLY LIVE THE LIFE. WHAT'S YOUR *SECRET?*
I'M *TELLIN'* YA, BRO-- YOU'VE GOT TO DITCH S.H.I.E.L.D. AND GO *FREELANCE* LIKE *ME!*
NO *RULES,* MORE *FUN*...
...AND *MONEY!*
LOTS AND *LOTS* OF MONEY.
HMM THIS HERO-FOR-HIRE THING IS STARTING TO SOUND PRETTY GOOD.
OOOH! WE'RE *HERE!*
DEET DEET DEET DEET DEET

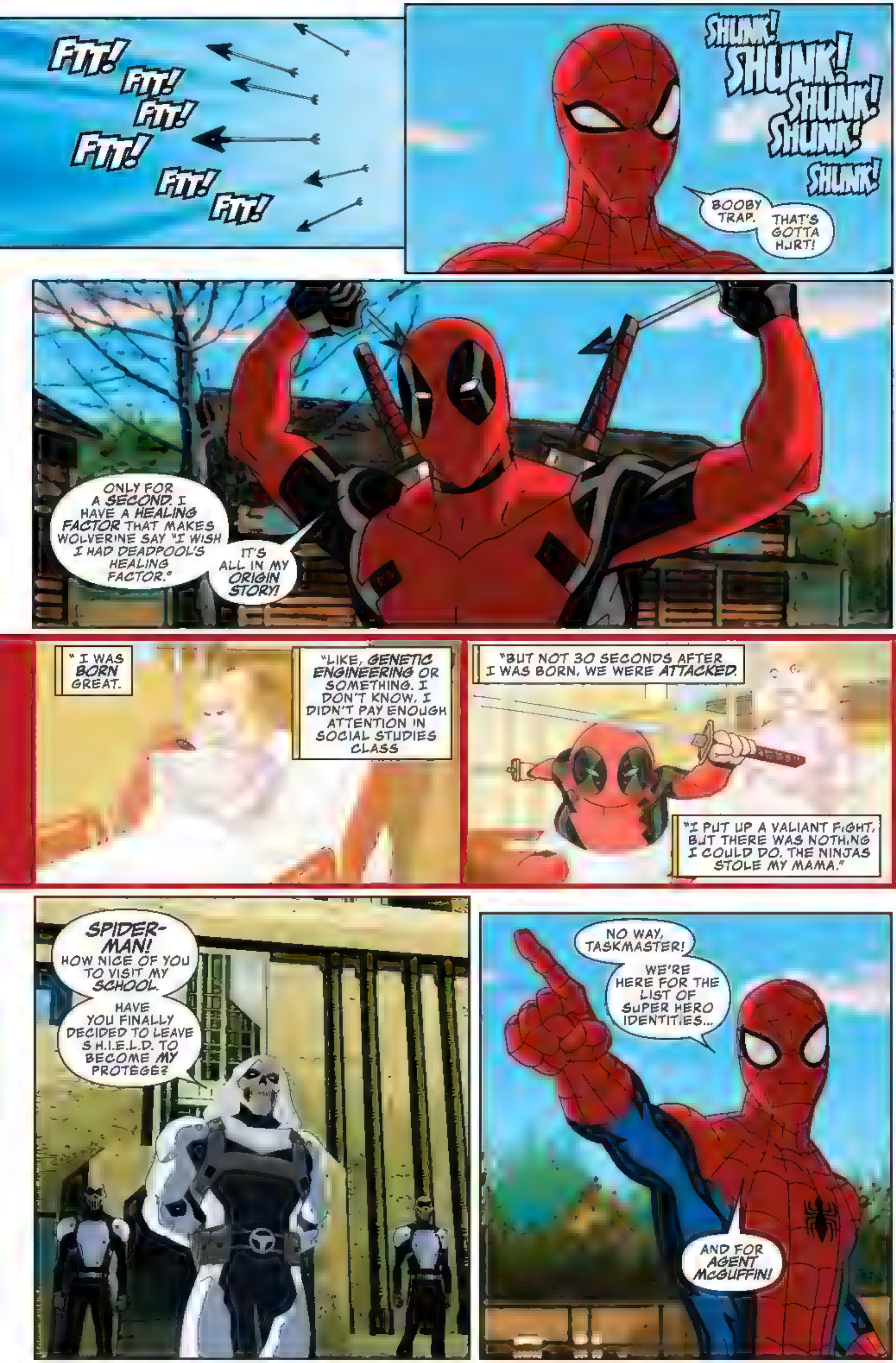

I DON'T KNOW IF SPIDERS HAVE BUTTS, BUT YOU'D BETTER HOLD ONTO YOURS
CLICK!
SPRANG!
WHY'D YOU HIT THE EJECTOR BUTTON?
DON'T YOU KNOW HOW TO LAND THIS THING?
WHAT'S THE FUN IN THAT?
THAT'S THE PLACE!
NOW WHAT? WE DON'T HAVE PARACHUTES!
PARACHUTE!
GREAT IDEA!
WHEEE!
YOU HAD ONE THIS WHOLE TIME?
THWIP!
THWIP!
YOU'RE NOT THE ONLY ONE WITH A TRICK UP HIS SLEEVE!
A WEB-CHUTE! HOW ADORABLE!

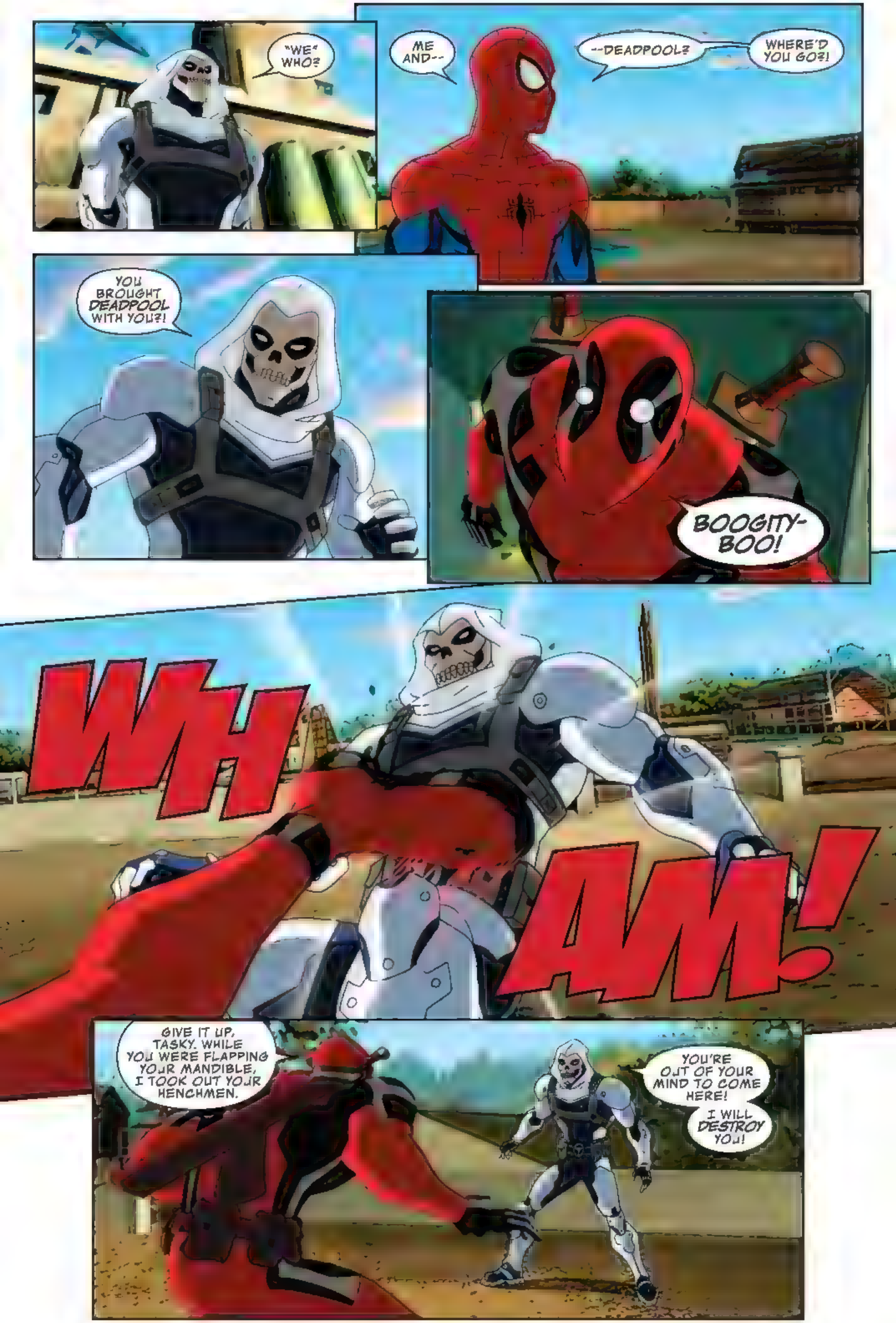

BUT IS IT FLAME-RESISTANT?
WHAT?
IF YOU'RE GONNA GO FREELANCE, YOU'VE GOTTA LEARN TO LIVE A LITTLE!
FIRE IN A CAN
FOR REAL
FROOSH!
WHAT ARE YOU--
YAAAH!
AIM FOR THE TREES! FOLIAGE IS YOUR FRIEND!


OUR LANDINGS WERE SO DIFFERENT!
YOU'RE NUTS.
DO YOU EVEN HAVE A PLAN?
OF COURSE!
WE GO INTO THAT COMPOUND, GRAB AGENT McGUFFIN, SNAG THE IDENTITIES LIST, THEN UN-ALIVE THE TASKMASTER AND HIS ACOLYTES.
"UN-ALIVE"? YOU MEAN *KILL* THEM?!
UH-UH! YOU CAN'T SAY THE *K-WORD* IN A *KIDS COMIC BOOK!*
BUT, YEAH, WE'RE GONNA *DESTROY* THEM, *UN-ALIVE* THEM, *SLEEP* THEM WITH THE *FISHES*, YADDA YADDA
WE CAN'T KI--ERR, *K-WORD* ANYBODY!
WE *CAN'T?*

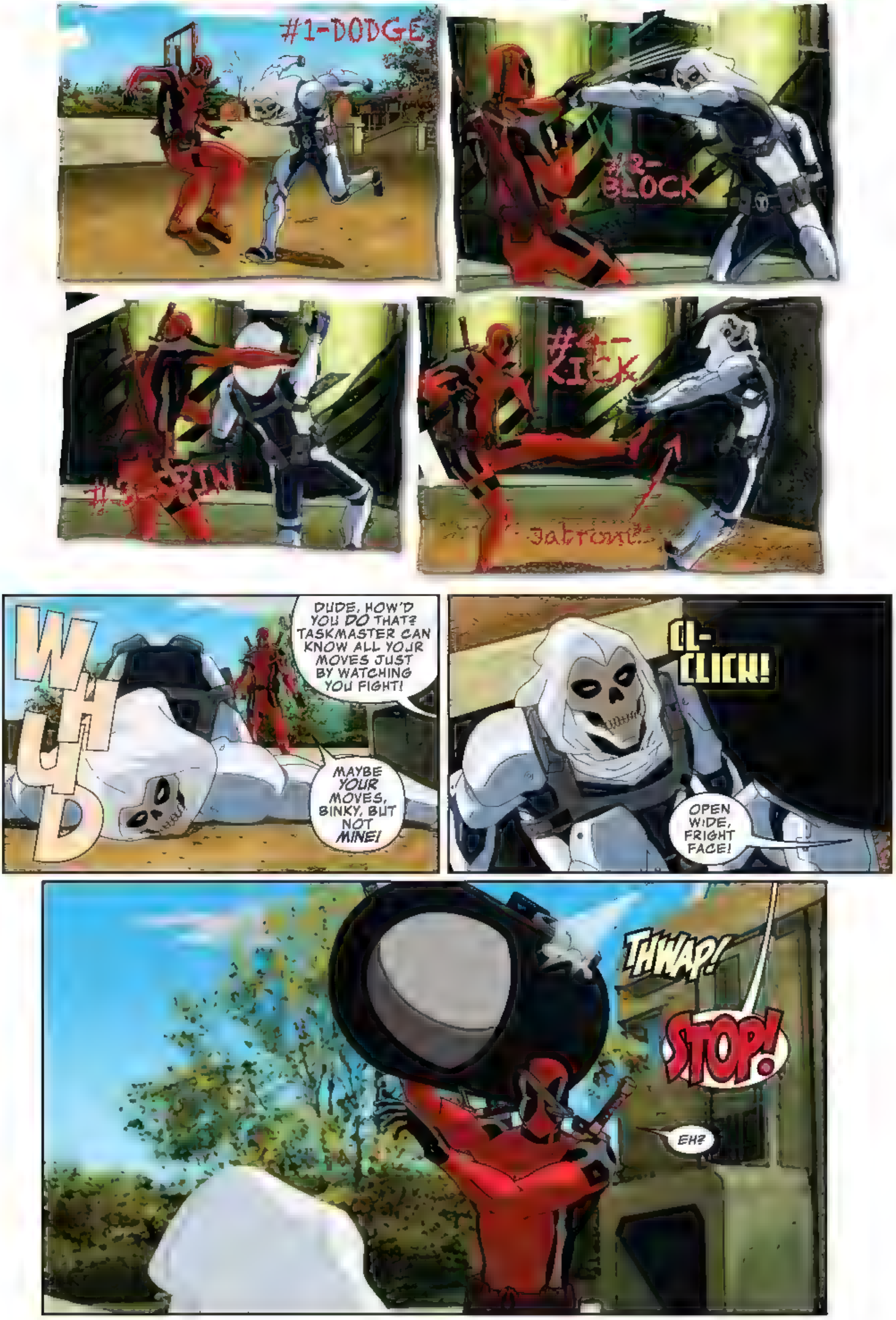

"SAYS WHO?"
TASKMASTER'S COMPOUND.
ABOUT TO GO BOOM.
BOOOM!
HELLO, FELLAS!
KRAK!
HA!
KEE-YAH!
SAY CHEESE!
NO!
THWIP! THWIP!
MY SWORDS!
WHERE DID THEY GO?
I SAID NO!

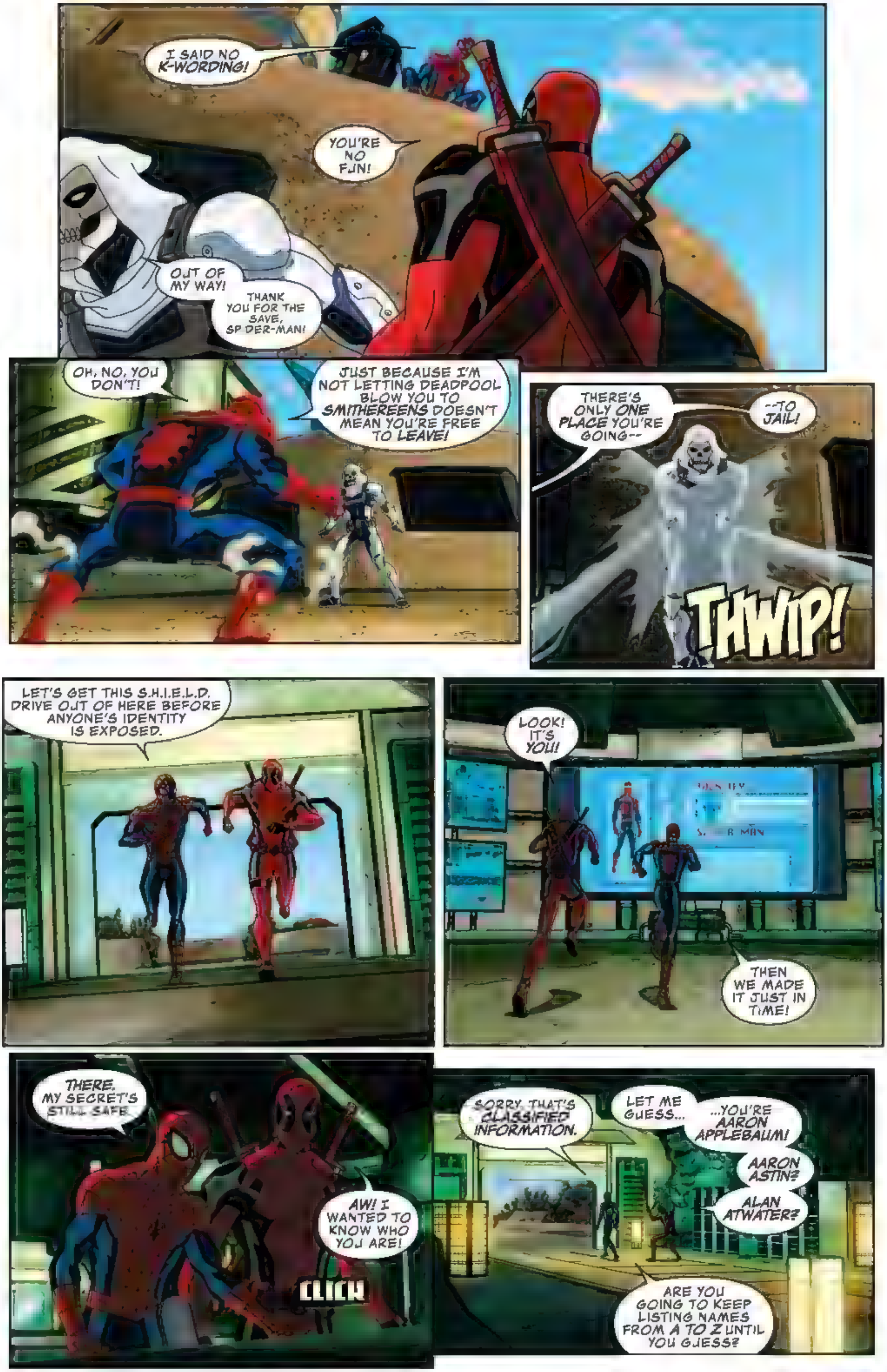

POW!
NGH...
HRNN...
SEE? SITUATION'S UNDER CONTROL AND NOBODY GOT K-WORDED!
WHAT'S YOUR HANG-UP, WEBS? SO MUCH GUILT OVER A LITTLE SPILLED GUTS
I BET YOU'RE ONE OF THOSE GUYS THAT HAS A LITTLE ANGEL ON HIS SHOULDER THAT TELLS HIM UN-ALIVING SOMEONE IS BAD.
DON'T LISTEN TO HIM
FLOOSH!
OH, BUG OFF!
YOU'RE NOT A FREELANCE HERO, YOU'RE A MERCENARY!
WHAT'S THE BIG DEAL? IF YOU WANNA MAKE THE BIG BUCKS, YOU'VE GOTTA BREAK SOME RULES.

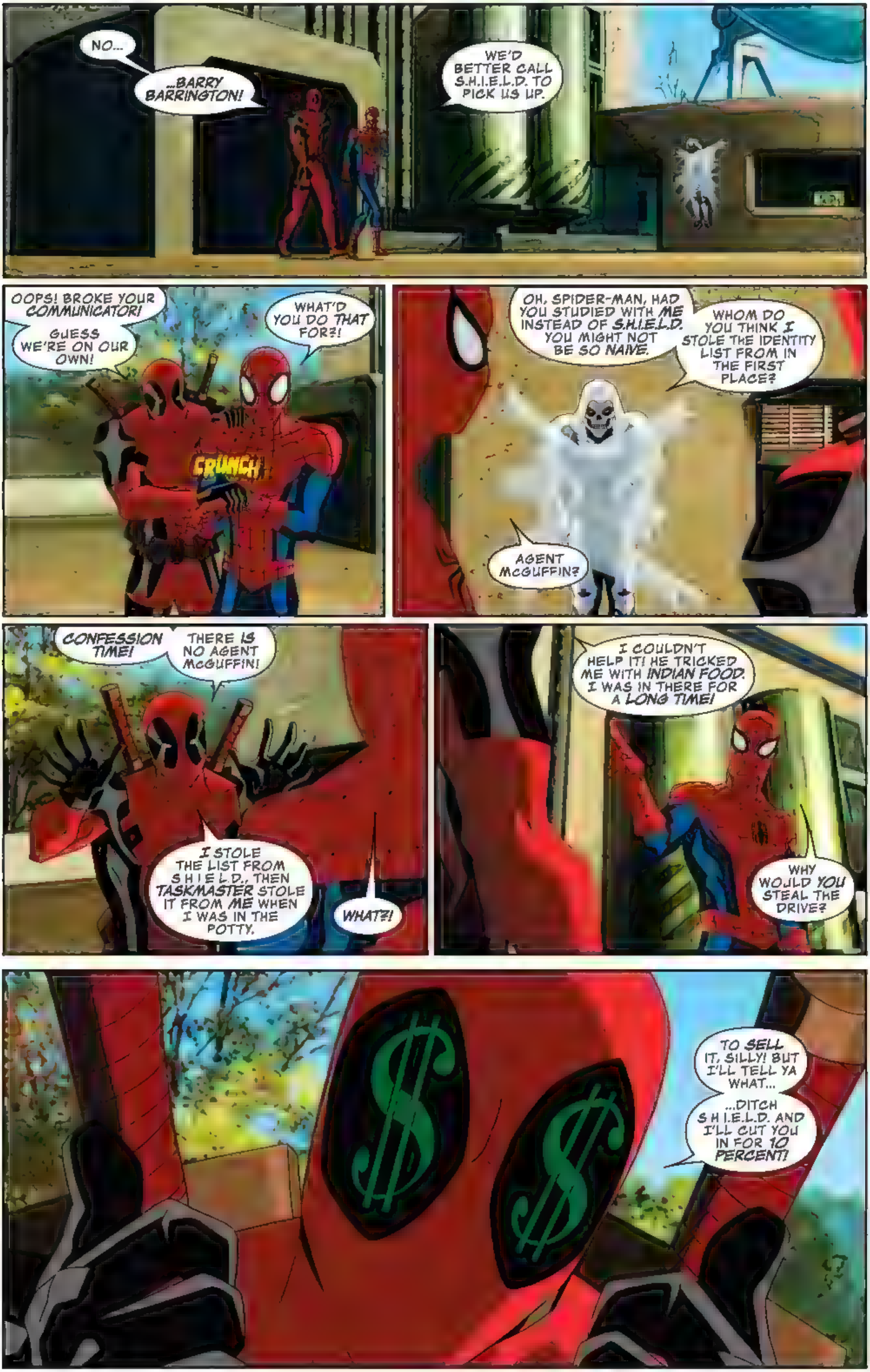

FTT! FTT! FTT! FTT! FTT! FTT!
SHUNK! SHUNK! SHUNK! SHUNK! SHUNK!
BOOBY TRAP.
THAT'S GOTTA HURT!
ONLY FOR A SECOND. I HAVE A HEALING FACTOR THAT MAKES WOLVERINE SAY "I WISH I HAD DEADPOOL'S HEALING FACTOR."
IT'S ALL IN MY ORIGIN STORY!
"I WAS BORN GREAT.
"LIKE, GENETIC ENGINEERING OR SOMETHING. I DON'T KNOW. I DIDN'T PAY ENOUGH ATTENTION IN SOCIAL STUDIES CLASS
"BUT NOT 30 SECONDS AFTER I WAS BORN, WE WERE ATTACKED.
"I PUT UP A VALIANT FIGHT, BUT THERE WAS NOTHING I COULD DO. THE NINJAS STOLE MY MAMA."
SPIDER-MAN! HOW NICE OF YOU TO VISIT MY SCHOOL.
HAVE YOU FINALLY DECIDED TO LEAVE S.H.I.E.L.D. TO BECOME MY PROTEGE?
NO WAY, TASKMASTER!
WE'RE HERE FOR THE LIST OF SUPER HERO IDENTITIES...
AND FOR AGENT MCGUFFIN!

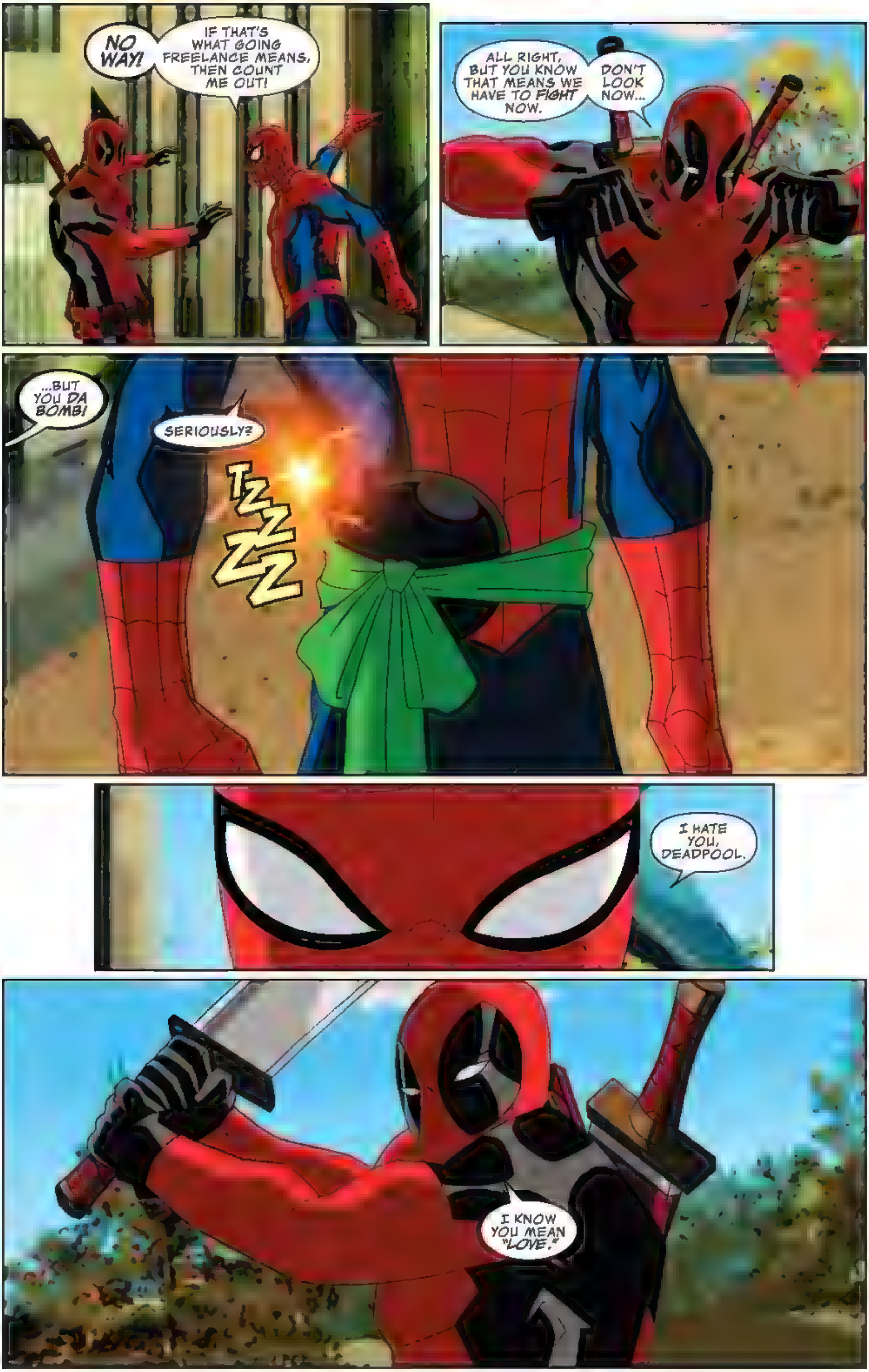

"WE" WHO?
ME AND--
--DEADPOOL?
WHERE'D YOU GO?!
YOU BROUGHT DEADPOOL WITH YOU?!
BOOGITY-BOO!
WHAM!
GIVE IT UP, TASKY. WHILE YOU WERE FLAPPING YOUR MANDIBLE, I TOOK OUT YOUR HENCHMEN.
YOU'RE OUT OF YOUR MIND TO COME HERE!
I WILL DESTROY YOU!

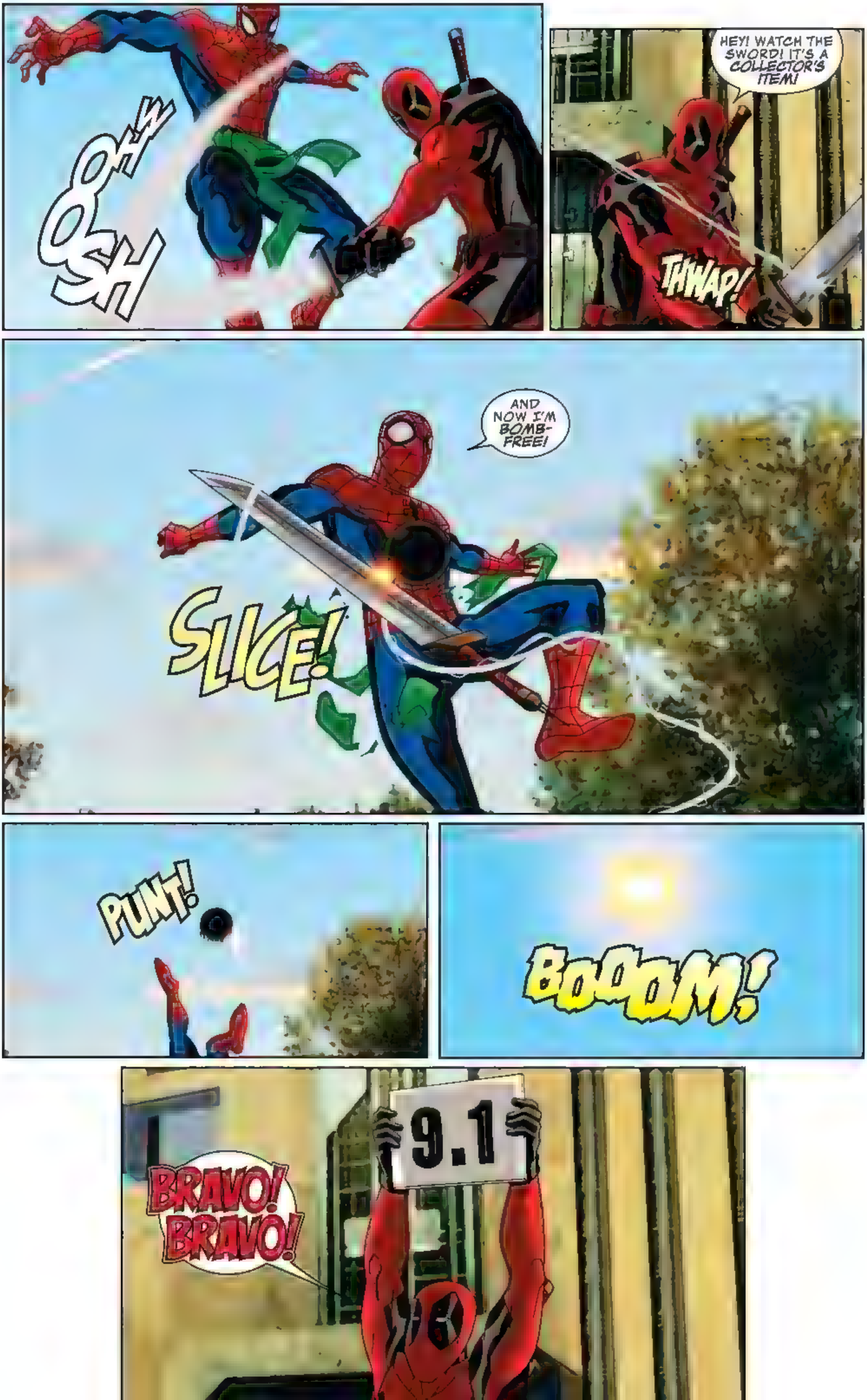
HOW TO MAKE A TASKMASTER LOOK LIKE A CHUMP IN FOUR EASY STEPS:

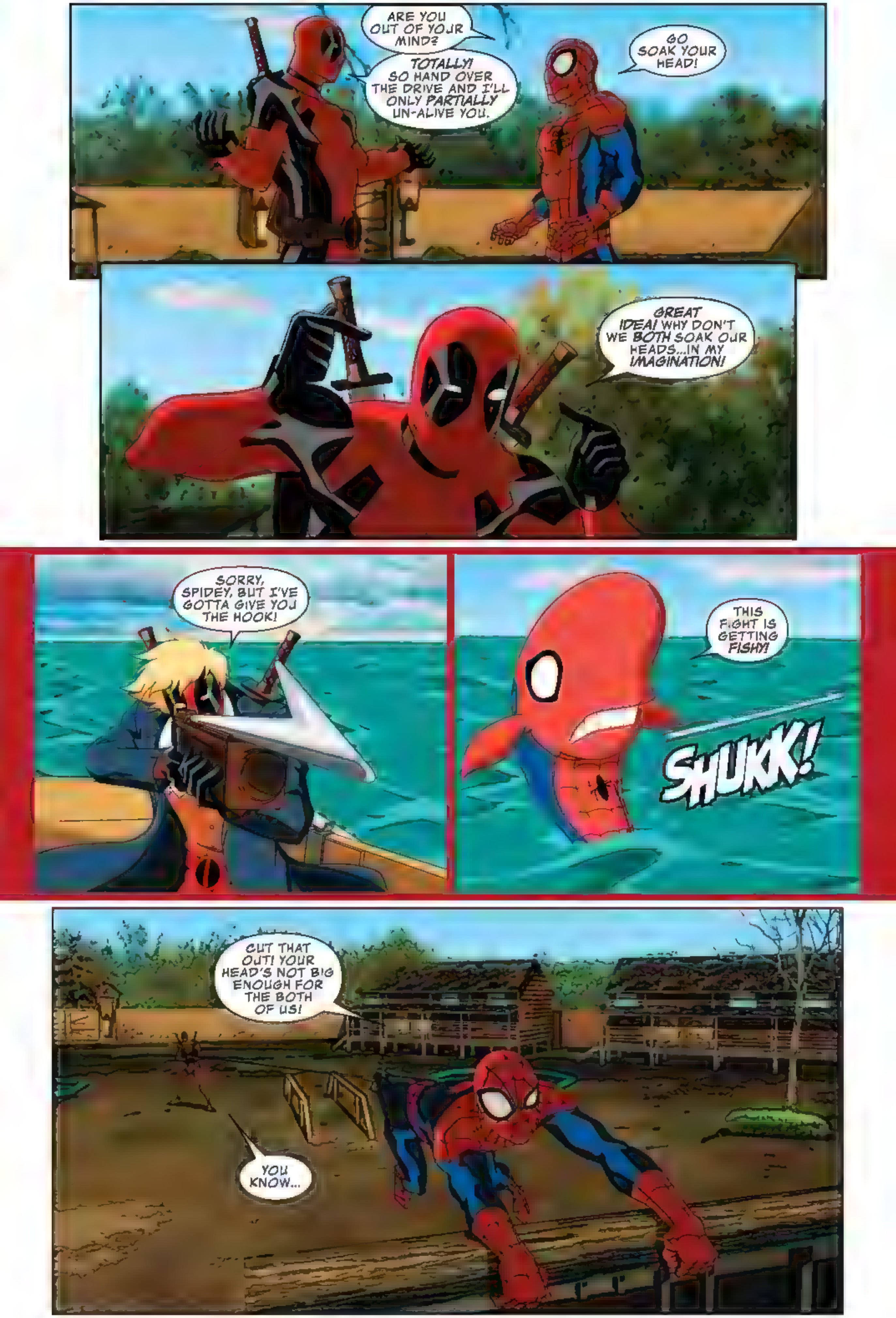

#1-DODGE
#2-BLOCK
#3-SPIN
#4-KICK
Jabroni!
WHUD
DUDE, HOW'D YOU DO THAT? TASKMASTER CAN KNOW ALL YOUR MOVES JUST BY WATCHING YOU FIGHT!
MAYBE YOUR MOVES, BINKY, BUT NOT MINE!
CL-CLICK!
OPEN WIDE, FRIGHT FACE!
THWAP!
STOP!
EH?

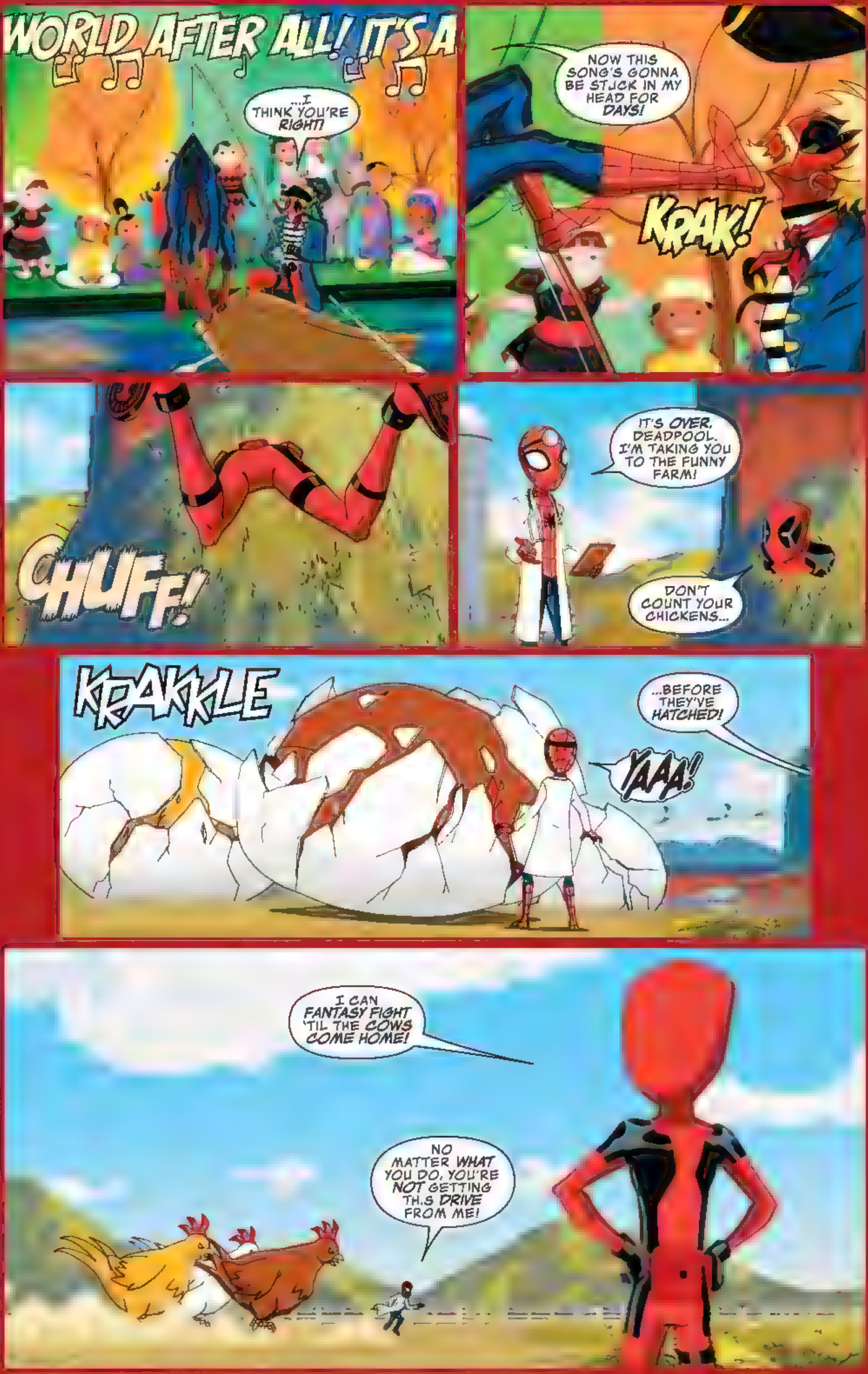

I SAID NO K-WORDING!
YOU'RE NO FUN!
OUT OF MY WAY!
THANK YOU FOR THE SAVE, SPIDER-MAN!
OH, NO, YOU DON'T!
JUST BECAUSE I'M NOT LETTING DEADPOOL BLOW YOU TO SMITHEREENS DOESN'T MEAN YOU'RE FREE TO LEAVE!
THERE'S ONLY ONE PLACE YOU'RE GOING--
--TO JAIL!
THWIP!
LET'S GET THIS S.H.I.E.L.D. DRIVE OUT OF HERE BEFORE ANYONE'S IDENTITY IS EXPOSED.
LOOK! IT'S YOU!
THEN WE MADE IT JUST IN TIME!
THERE. MY SECRET'S STILL SAFE.
AW! I WANTED TO KNOW WHO YOU ARE!
CLICK
SORRY, THAT'S CLASSIFIED INFORMATION.
LET ME GUESS...
...YOU'RE AARON APPLEBAUM!
AARON ASTIN?
ALAN ATWATER?
ARE YOU GOING TO KEEP LISTING NAMES FROM A TO Z UNTIL YOU GUESS?

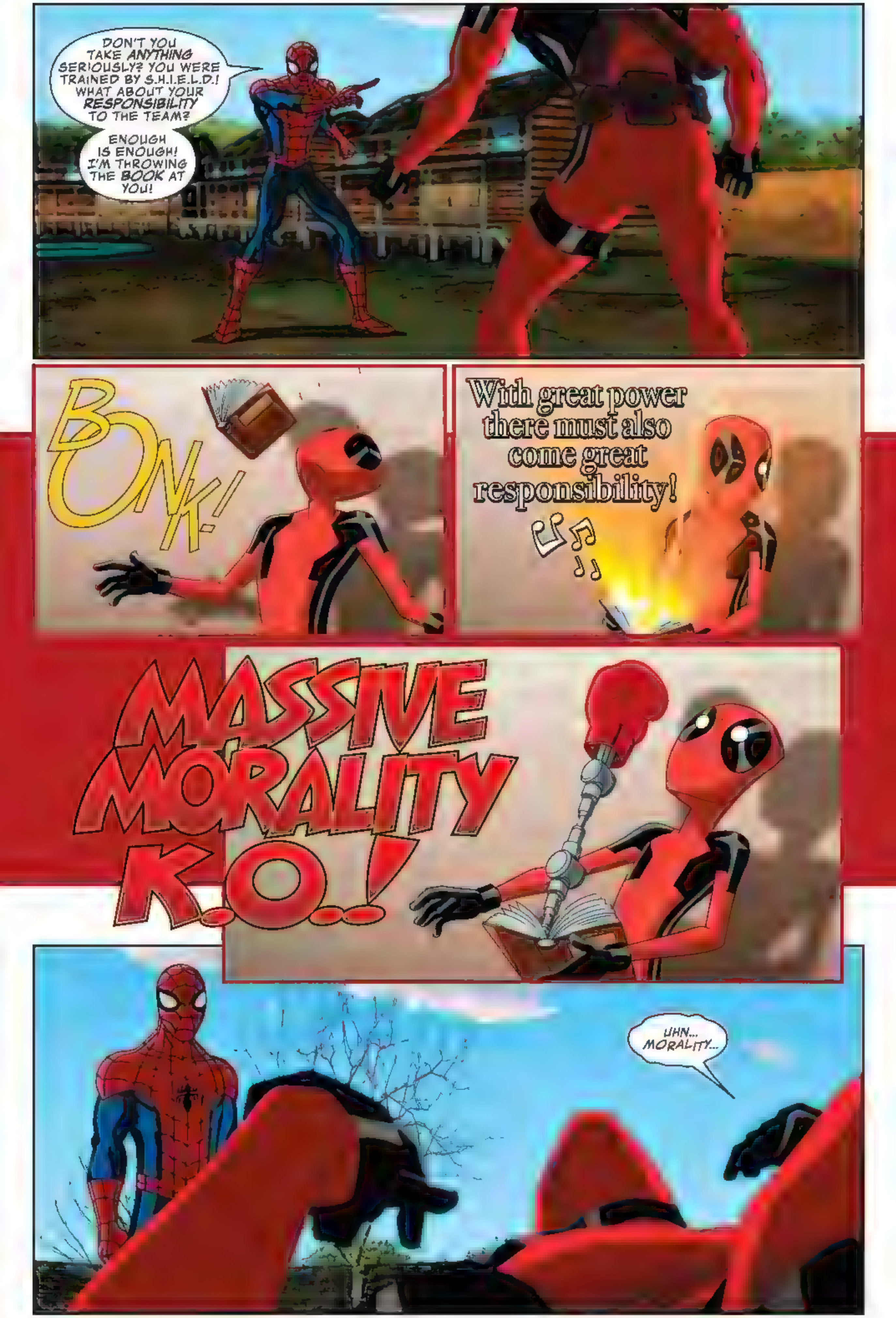

NO...
...BARRY BARRINGTON!
WE'D BETTER CALL S.H.I.E.L.D. TO PICK US UP.
OOPS! BROKE YOUR COMMUNICATOR!
GUESS WE'RE ON OUR OWN!
CRUNCH
WHAT'D YOU DO THAT FOR?!
OH, SPIDER-MAN, HAD YOU STUDIED WITH ME INSTEAD OF S.H.I.E.L.D. YOU MIGHT NOT BE SO NAIVE.
WHOM DO YOU THINK I STOLE THE IDENTITY LIST FROM IN THE FIRST PLACE?
AGENT McGUFFIN?
CONFESSION TIME!
THERE IS NO AGENT McGUFFIN!
I STOLE THE LIST FROM S.H.I.E.L.D., THEN TASKMASTER STOLE IT FROM ME WHEN I WAS IN THE POTTY.
WHAT?!
I COULDN'T HELP IT! HE TRICKED ME WITH INDIAN FOOD. I WAS IN THERE FOR A LONG TIME!
WHY WOULD YOU STEAL THE DRIVE?
TO SELL IT, SILLY! BUT I'LL TELL YA WHAT...
...DITCH S.H.I.E.L.D. AND I'LL CUT YOU IN FOR 10 PERCENT!

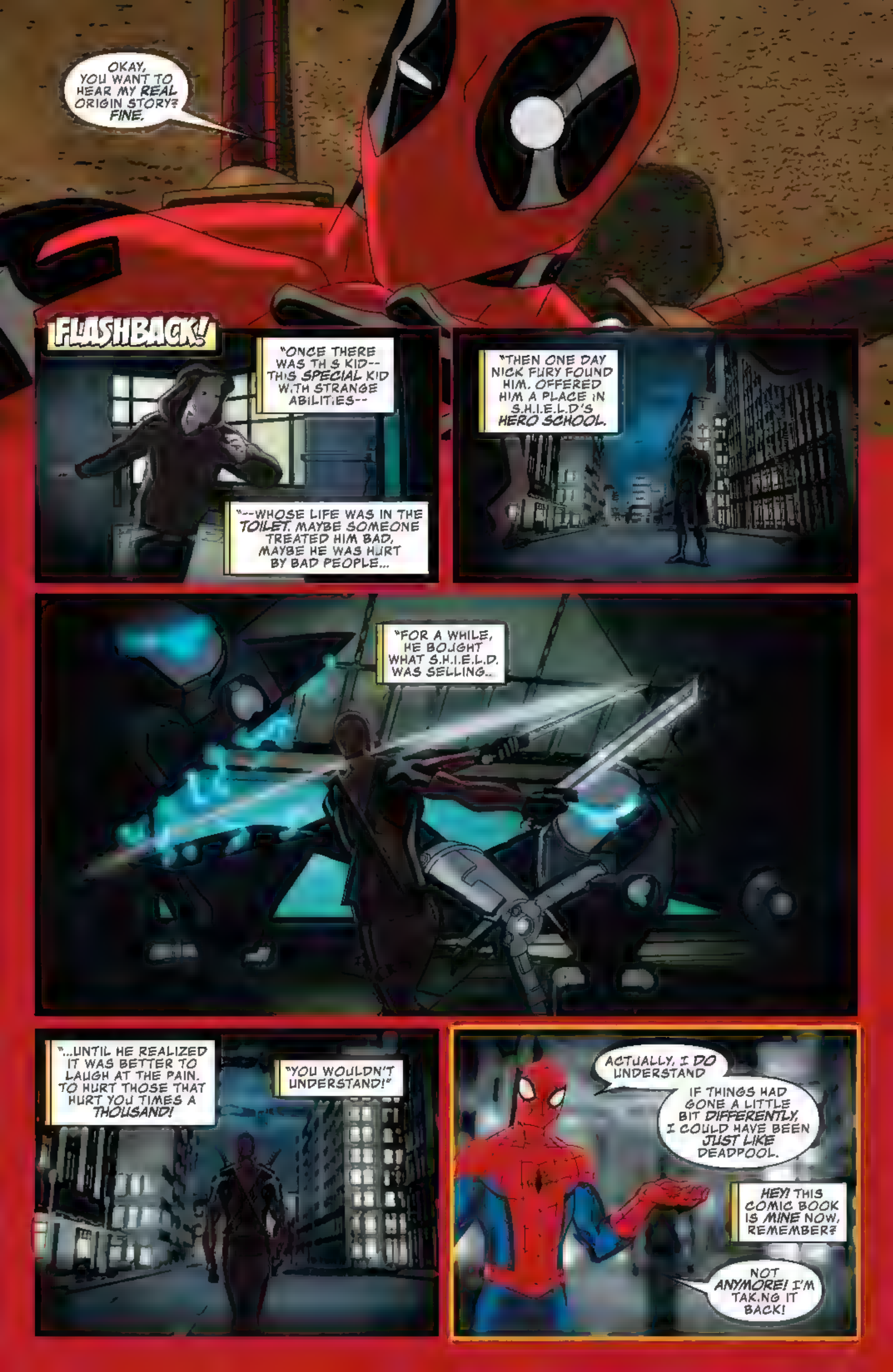

NO WAY!
IF THAT'S WHAT GOING FREELANCE MEANS, THEN COUNT ME OUT!
ALL RIGHT, BUT YOU KNOW THAT MEANS WE HAVE TO *FIGHT* NOW.
DON'T LOOK NOW...
...BUT YOU DA BOMB!
SERIOUSLY?
TZZZ
I HATE YOU, DEADPOOL.
I KNOW YOU MEAN *"LOVE."*

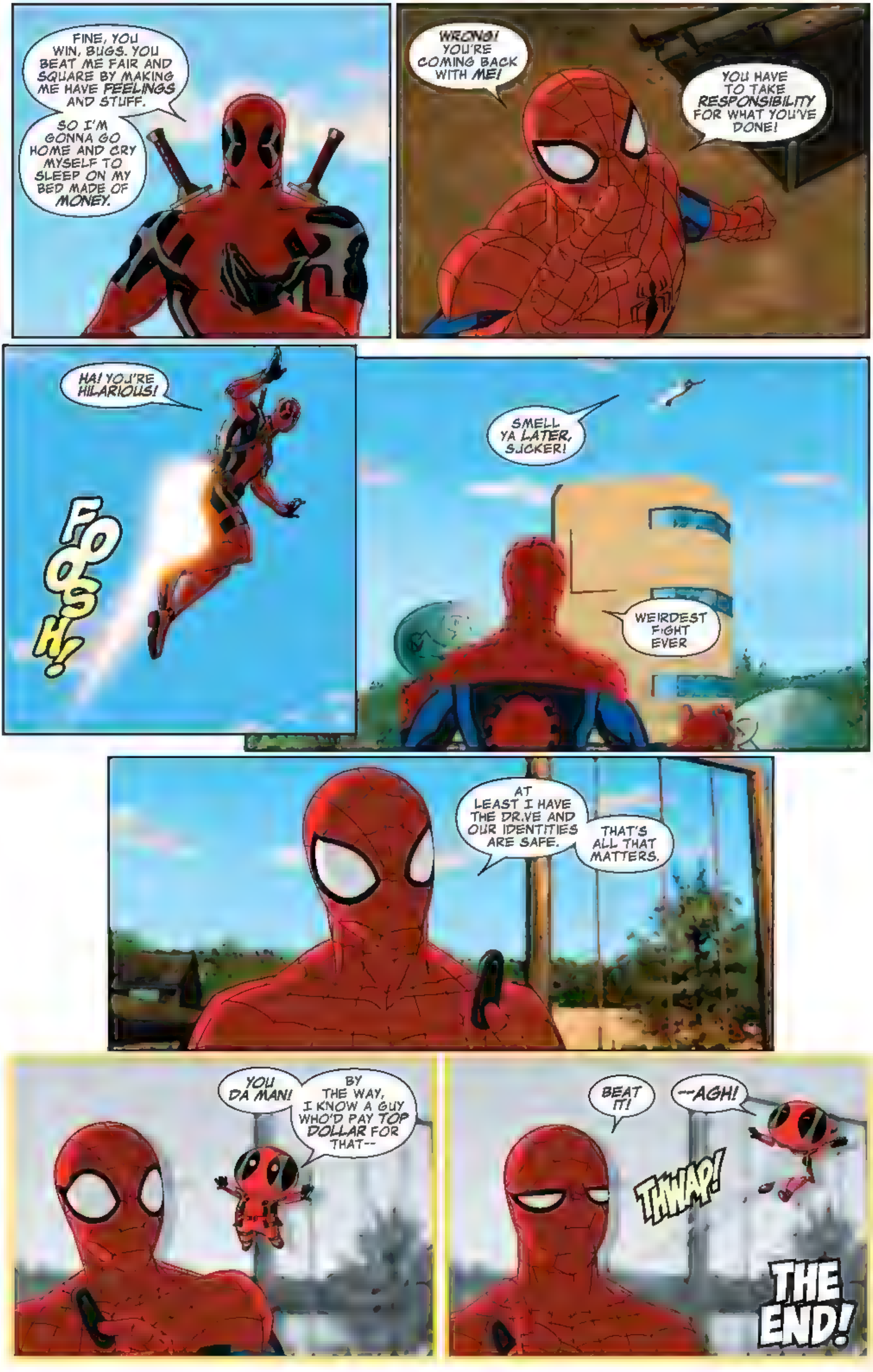

OHWOOSH
HEY! WATCH THE SWORD! IT'S A COLLECTOR'S ITEM!
THWAP!
AND NOW I'M BOMB-FREE!
SLICE!
PUNT!
BOOOM!
9.1
BRAVO! BRAVO!


ARE YOU OUT OF YOUR MIND?
TOTALLY! SO HAND OVER THE DRIVE AND I'LL ONLY PARTIALLY UN-ALIVE YOU.
GO SOAK YOUR HEAD!
GREAT IDEA! WHY DON'T WE BOTH SOAK OUR HEADS...IN MY IMAGINATION!
SORRY, SPIDEY, BUT I'VE GOTTA GIVE YOU THE HOOK!
THIS FIGHT IS GETTING FISHY!
SHUKK!
CUT THAT OUT! YOUR HEAD'S NOT BIG ENOUGH FOR THE BOTH OF US!
YOU KNOW...


WORLD AFTER ALL! IT'S A
...I THINK YOU'RE RIGHT!
NOW THIS SONG'S GONNA BE STUCK IN MY HEAD FOR DAYS!
KRAK!
CHUFF!
IT'S OVER, DEADPOOL. I'M TAKING YOU TO THE FUNNY FARM!
DON'T COUNT YOUR CHICKENS...
KRAKKLE
...BEFORE THEY'VE HATCHED!
YAAA!
I CAN FANTASY FIGHT 'TIL THE COWS COME HOME!
NO MATTER WHAT YOU DO, YOU'RE NOT GETTING THIS DRIVE FROM ME!


DON'T YOU TAKE *ANYTHING* SERIOUSLY? YOU WERE TRAINED BY S.H.I.E.L.D.! WHAT ABOUT YOUR *RESPONSIBILITY* TO THE TEAM?
ENOUGH IS ENOUGH! I'M THROWING THE *BOOK* AT YOU!
BONK!
With great power there must also come great responsibility!
MASSIVE MORALITY K.O.!
UHN... MORALITY...


OKAY, YOU WANT TO HEAR MY *REAL* ORIGIN STORY? *FINE.*
FLASHBACK!
"ONCE THERE WAS THIS KID-- THIS *SPECIAL* KID WITH STRANGE ABILITIES--
"--WHOSE LIFE WAS IN THE *TOILET.* MAYBE SOMEONE TREATED HIM BAD. MAYBE HE WAS HURT BY BAD PEOPLE...
"THEN ONE DAY NICK FURY FOUND HIM. OFFERED HIM A PLACE IN S.H.I.E.L.D'S *HERO SCHOOL.*
"FOR A WHILE, HE BOUGHT WHAT S.H.I.E.L.D. WAS SELLING...
"...UNTIL HE REALIZED IT WAS BETTER TO LAUGH AT THE PAIN. TO HURT THOSE THAT HURT YOU TIMES A *THOUSAND!*
"YOU WOULDN'T UNDERSTAND!"
ACTUALLY, I *DO* UNDERSTAND.
IF THINGS HAD GONE A LITTLE BIT *DIFFERENTLY,* I COULD HAVE BEEN *JUST LIKE* DEADPOOL.
HEY! THIS COMIC BOOK IS *MINE* NOW, REMEMBER?
NOT *ANYMORE!* I'M TAKING IT BACK!


FINE, YOU WIN, BUGS. YOU BEAT ME FAIR AND SQUARE BY MAKING ME HAVE FEELINGS AND STUFF.
SO I'M GONNA GO HOME AND CRY MYSELF TO SLEEP ON MY BED MADE OF MONEY.
WRONG! YOU'RE COMING BACK WITH ME!
YOU HAVE TO TAKE RESPONSIBILITY FOR WHAT YOU'VE DONE!
HA! YOU'RE HILARIOUS!
FOOSH!
SMELL YA LATER, SUCKER!
WEIRDEST FIGHT EVER
AT LEAST I HAVE THE DRIVE AND OUR IDENTITIES ARE SAFE.
THAT'S ALL THAT MATTERS.
YOU DA MAN!
BY THE WAY, I KNOW A GUY WHO'D PAY TOP DOLLAR FOR THAT--
BEAT IT!
--AGH!
THWAP!
THE END!

SHARE YOUR UNIVERSE

It's YOUR universe. Now make it *THEIRS*!

FIVE QUESTIONS WITH EUGENE SON

Q. What is your official title at Marvel Television, and what does that mean? What are your daily responsibilities?

A. I'm story editor on the third season of ULTIMATE SPIDER-MAN, a.k.a. ULTIMATE SPIDER-MAN: WEB WARRIORS. I'm essentially the show's head writer, working closely with our show's producers and executives. I'm part of the braintrust that "pitches" stories – which means to come up with new story ideas. Then I lead when we "break" the stories – which means to plot out the beginning/middle/end of our episodes. Once we've done that, I assign it to the writers who script the actions for our artists to draw and the dialogue for our actors to perform. I rewrite the completed scripts based on feedback and notes from producers and executives. Then I'm there to help with making changes and fixes at every step of the way until the animation is "locked" and ready to air.

Q. There are many different writers that work on ULTIMATE SPIDER-MAN: WEB WARRIORS. How do they decide who writes which episode?

A. Deciding on episodes is easy because we have such fantastic writers on our show. Writers like Marty Isenberg, Kevin Burke & Doc Wyatt, Danielle Wolff, Brandon Auman, Brian Michael Bendis, Paul Dini, and others are so talented, there's no need to pick and choose or tailor an episode for a particular writer, because they're all gifted enough to do a great job with anything we throw at them. It's only a matter of scheduling to see if they have time in their busy schedules!

Q. What did you want to be when you were growing up? Did you always want to work in TV and animation?

A. As a kid growing up, I always wanted to write cartoons and comic books. In high school, I would go to comic book conventions and beg the writers for copies of their scripts and study them. When I got to college, I decided the best career path to being a writer would be through Hollywood. While trying to get into screenwriting, I got very lucky and my opportunities led me to writing TV animation and then comic books. I haven't looked back since.

Q. Which character from the Marvel Universe would you most want to see in an upcoming episode of WEB WARRIORS that we haven't already seen?

A. Getting to see Cloak & Dagger, Amadeus Cho, and Squirrel Girl animated in WEB WARRIORS this season has been a thrill. As for upcoming stuff, there are two very cool and extremely popular heroes introduced recently in the Marvel comics that you'll be seeing animated in...if I say any more, I'll get in trouble. But trust me, it's going to be awesome.

Q. Any advice for the kids out there who hope to have a career in comics or animation someday?

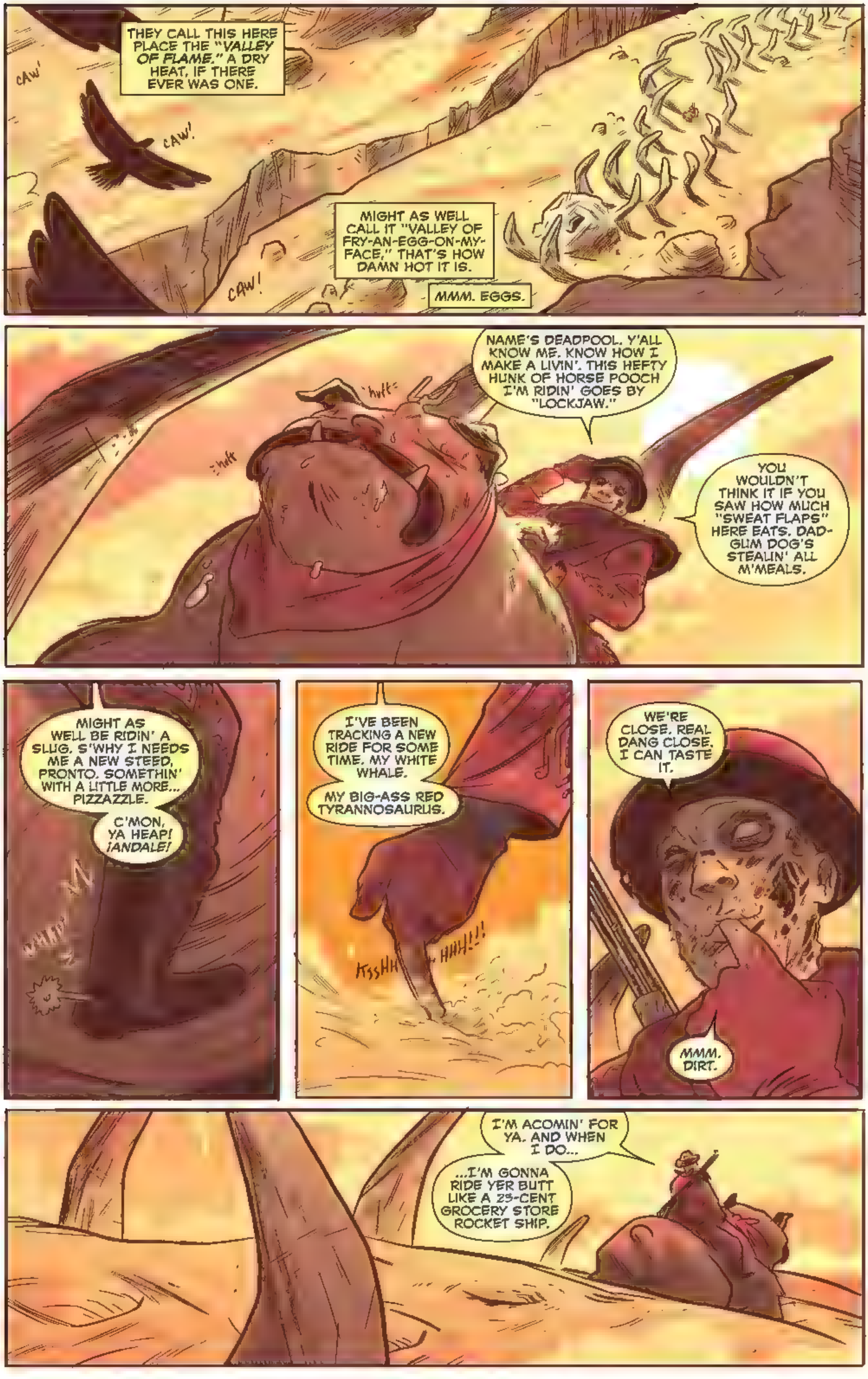
A. Don't just read one type of comic book or watch one kind of TV show. Broaden your tastes and try new things. There is so much cool stuff out there in the world! Try independent comic books, Korean TV, French films, pulp detective mysteries, Silver Age monster comics, British sitcoms, war documentaries, sports biographies, anything that seems new and different. All the things you're exposed to will help make you a well-rounded storyteller and influence you in fresh, new ways.

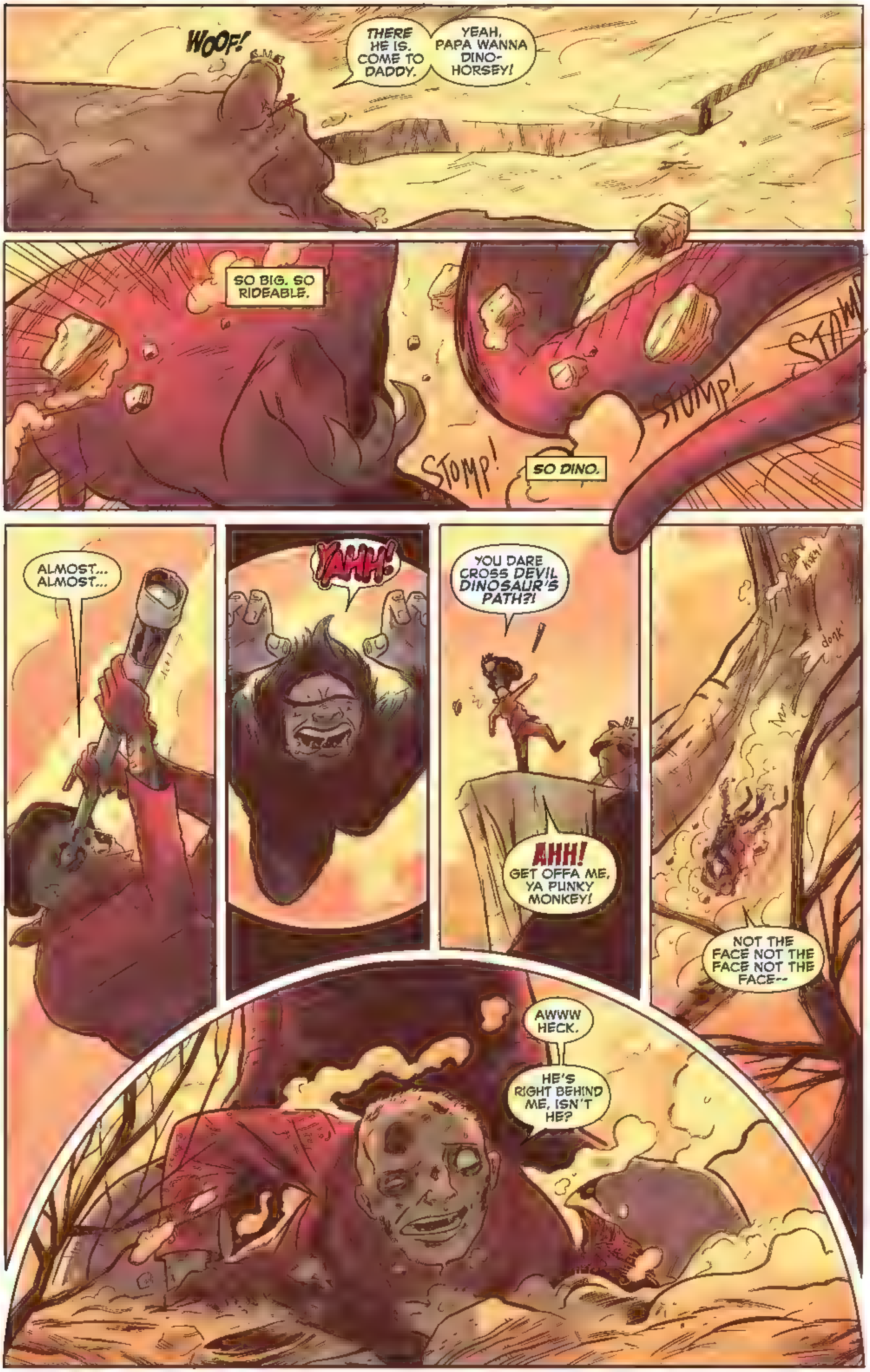
NEXT: GAME ON!

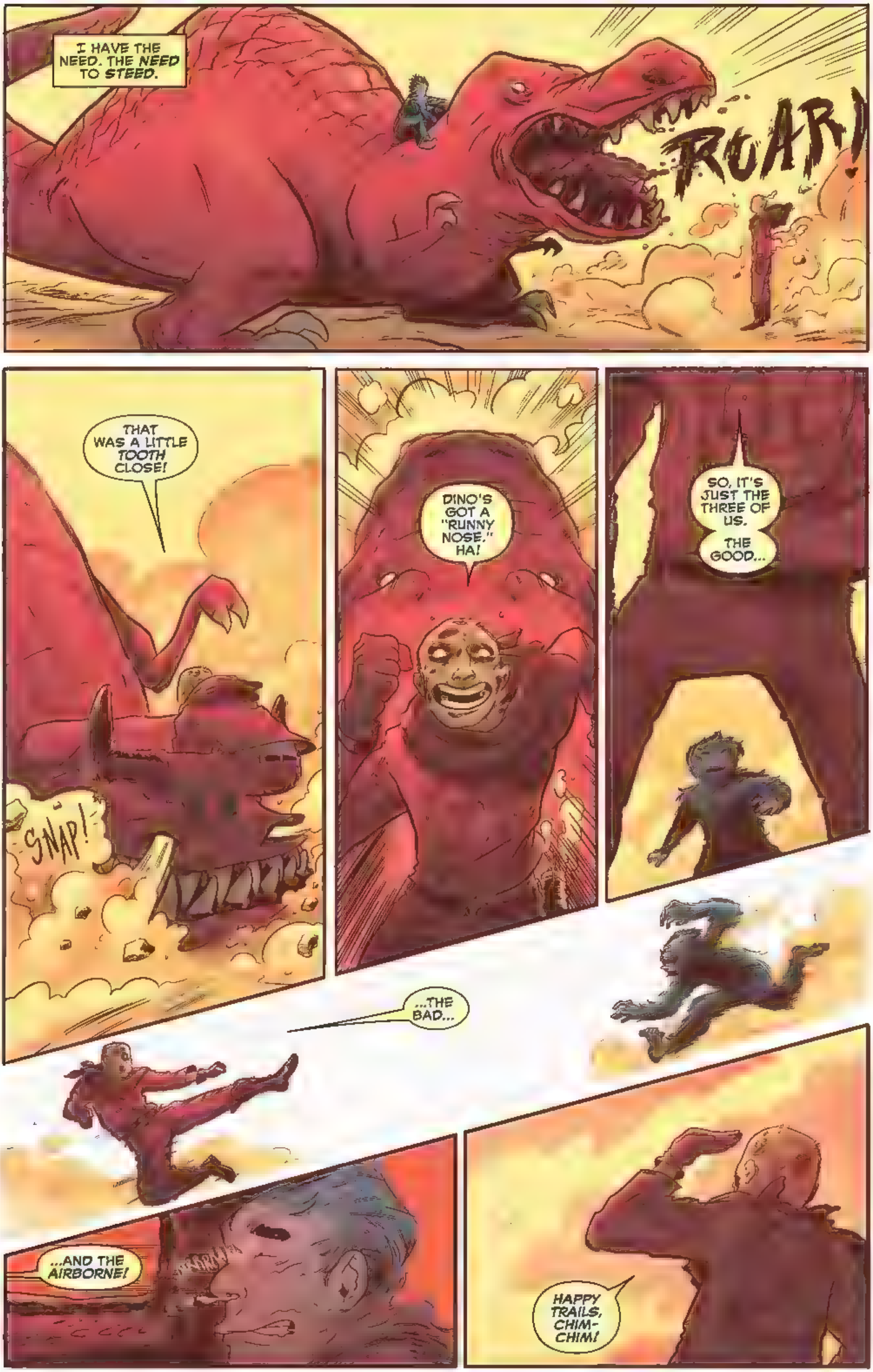
SECRET WARS
BATTLEWORLD
BRANDON
FERRIER
CONLEY
FAERBER
POPE
MARVEL
003

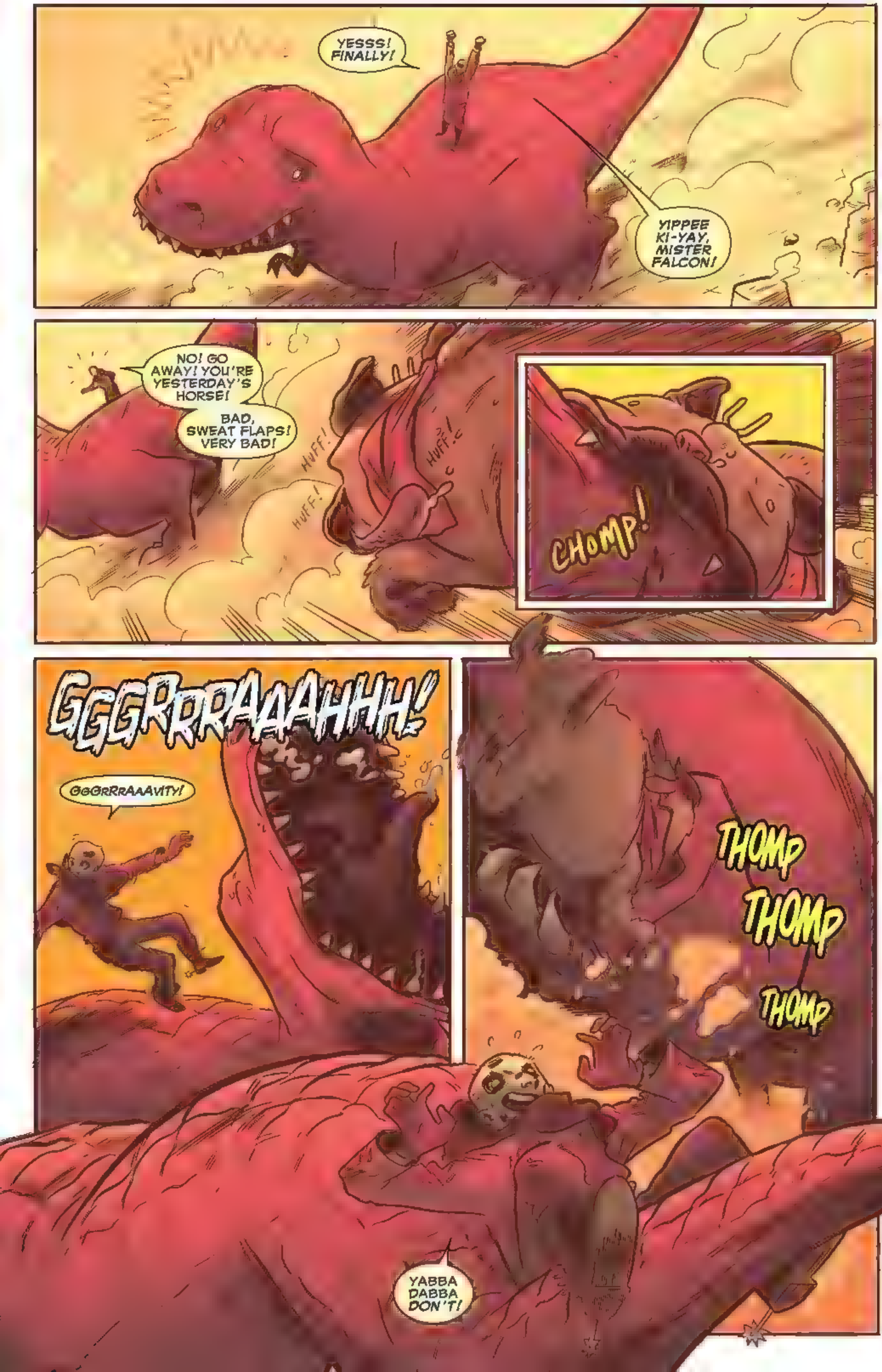
"FISTFUL OF 'CHANGAS"

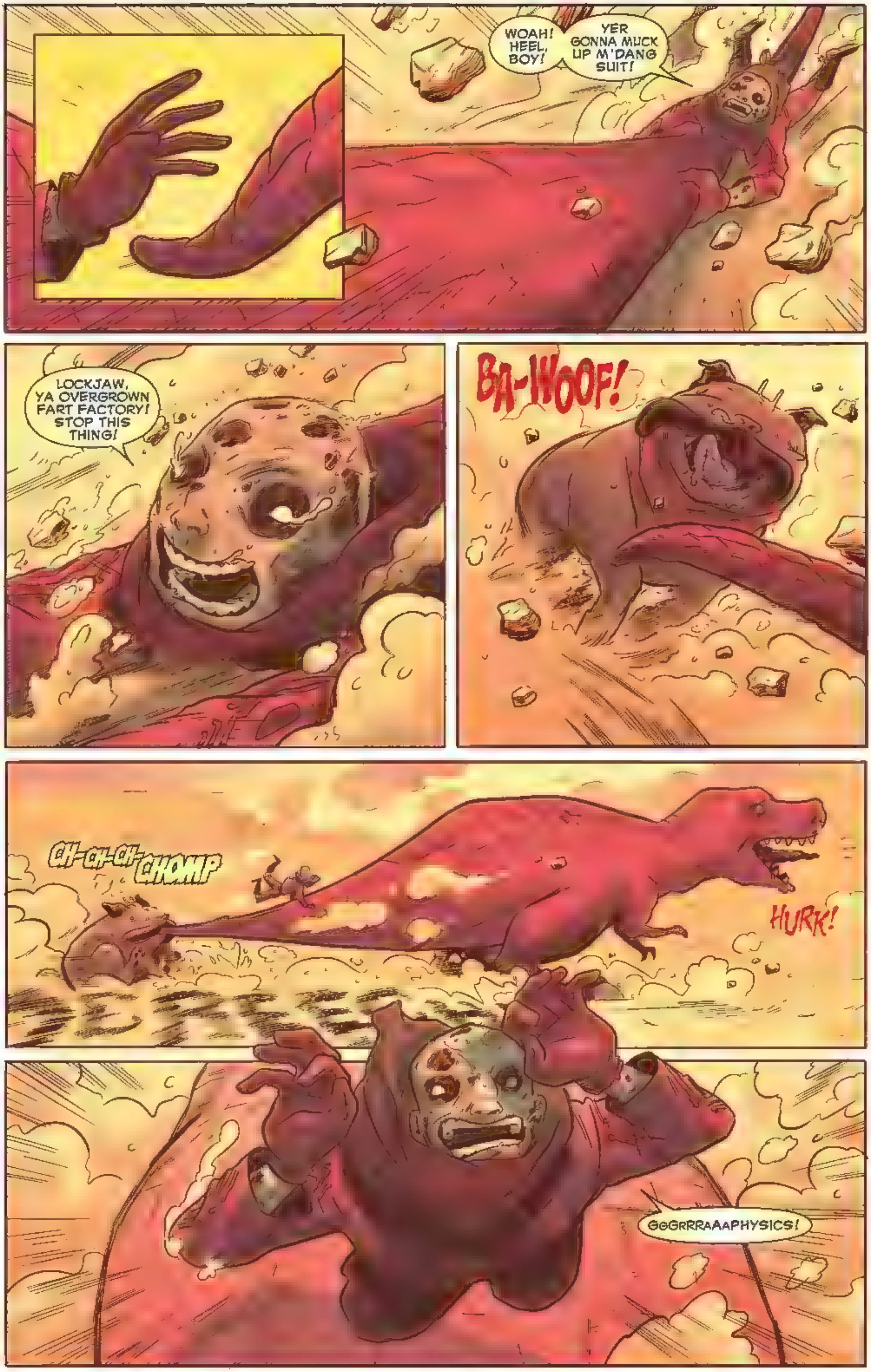
Writer: Ryan Ferrier • Artist & Colorist: Logan Faerber • Letterer: VC's Joe Caramagna • Editor: Jon Moisan • Cover Art: Scott Hepburn & Matt Milla

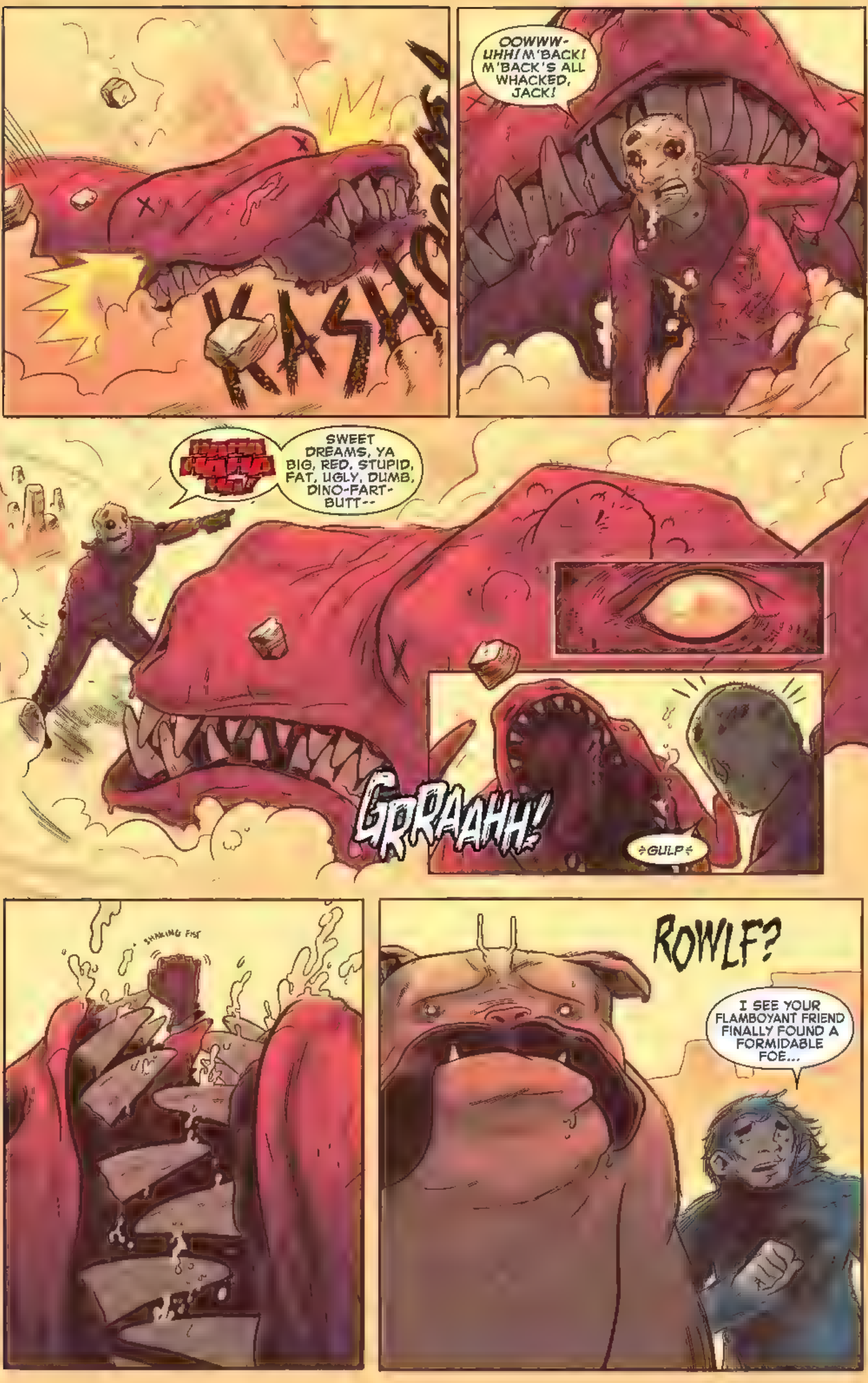

THEY CALL THIS HERE PLACE THE *"VALLEY OF FLAME."* A DRY HEAT, IF THERE EVER WAS ONE.
CAW!
CAW!
MIGHT AS WELL CALL IT "VALLEY OF FRY-AN-EGG-ON-MY-FACE," THAT'S HOW DAMN HOT IT IS.
CAW!
MMM. EGGS.
huff
huff
NAME'S DEADPOOL. Y'ALL KNOW ME. KNOW HOW I MAKE A LIVIN'. THIS HEFTY HUNK OF HORSE POOCH I'M RIDIN' GOES BY "LOCKJAW."
YOU WOULDN'T THINK IT IF YOU SAW HOW MUCH "SWEAT FLAPS" HERE EATS. DADGUM DOG'S STEALIN' ALL M'MEALS.
MIGHT AS WELL BE RIDIN' A SLUG. S'WHY I NEEDS ME A NEW STEED, PRONTO. SOMETHIN' WITH A LITTLE MORE... PIZZAZZLE.
C'MON, YA HEAP! ¡ANDALE!
WHIP
I'VE BEEN TRACKING A NEW RIDE FOR SOME TIME. MY WHITE WHALE.
MY BIG-ASS RED TYRANNOSAURUS.
KSSHHHHHH!!!
WE'RE CLOSE. REAL DANG CLOSE. I CAN TASTE IT.
MMM. DIRT.
I'M ACOMIN' FOR YA. AND WHEN I DO...
...I'M GONNA RIDE YER BUTT LIKE A 25-CENT GROCERY STORE ROCKET SHIP.

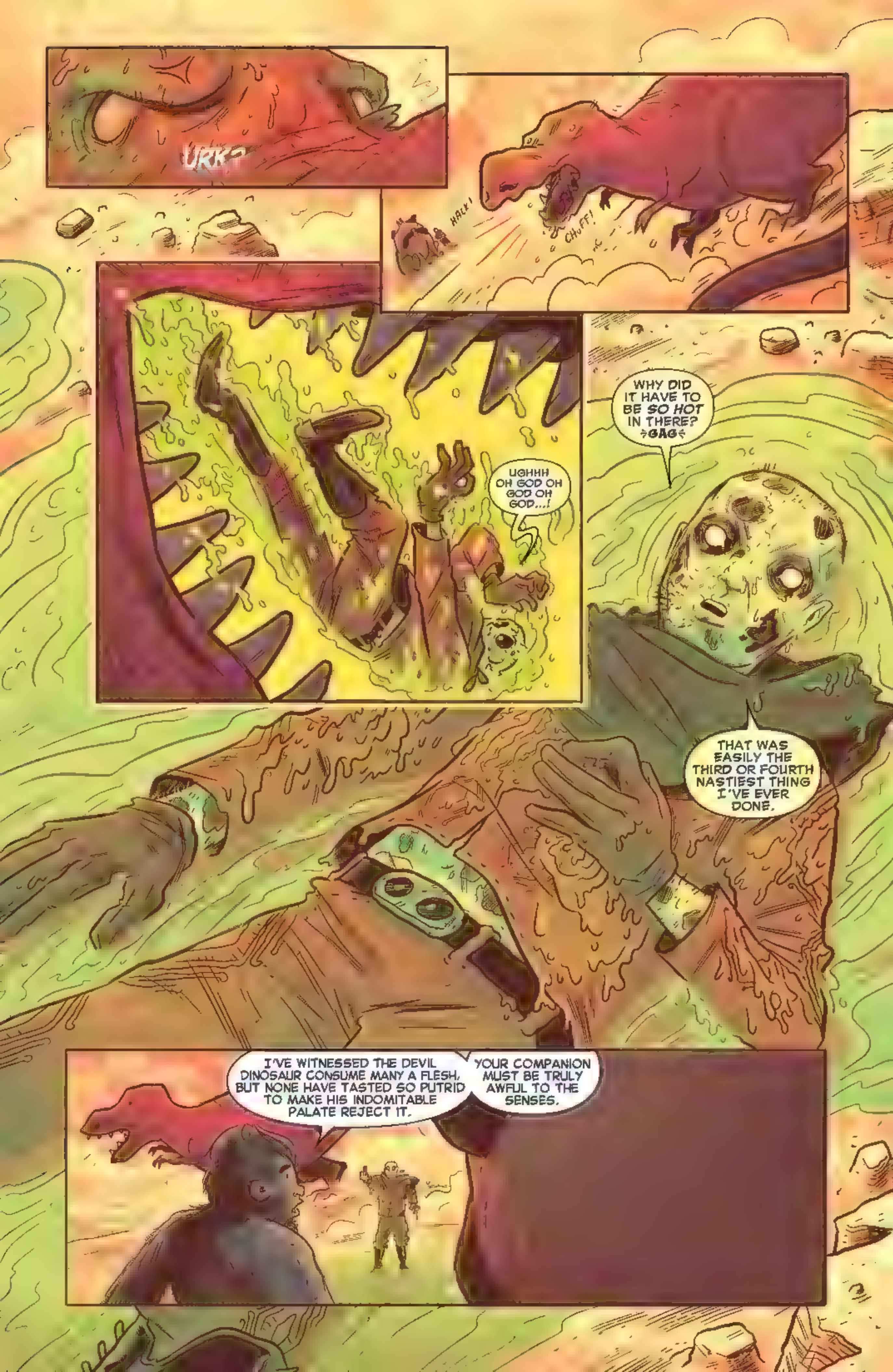

WOOF!
THERE HE IS. COME TO DADDY.
YEAH, PAPA WANNA DINO-HORSEY!
SO BIG. SO RIDEABLE.
STOMP!
STOMP!
STOMP!
SO DINO.
ALMOST... ALMOST...
YAHH!
YOU DARE CROSS DEVIL DINOSAUR'S PATH?!
AHH! GET OFFA ME, YA PUNKY MONKEY!
kick!
donk!
NOT THE FACE NOT THE FACE NOT THE FACE--
AWWW HECK.
HE'S RIGHT BEHIND ME, ISN'T HE?

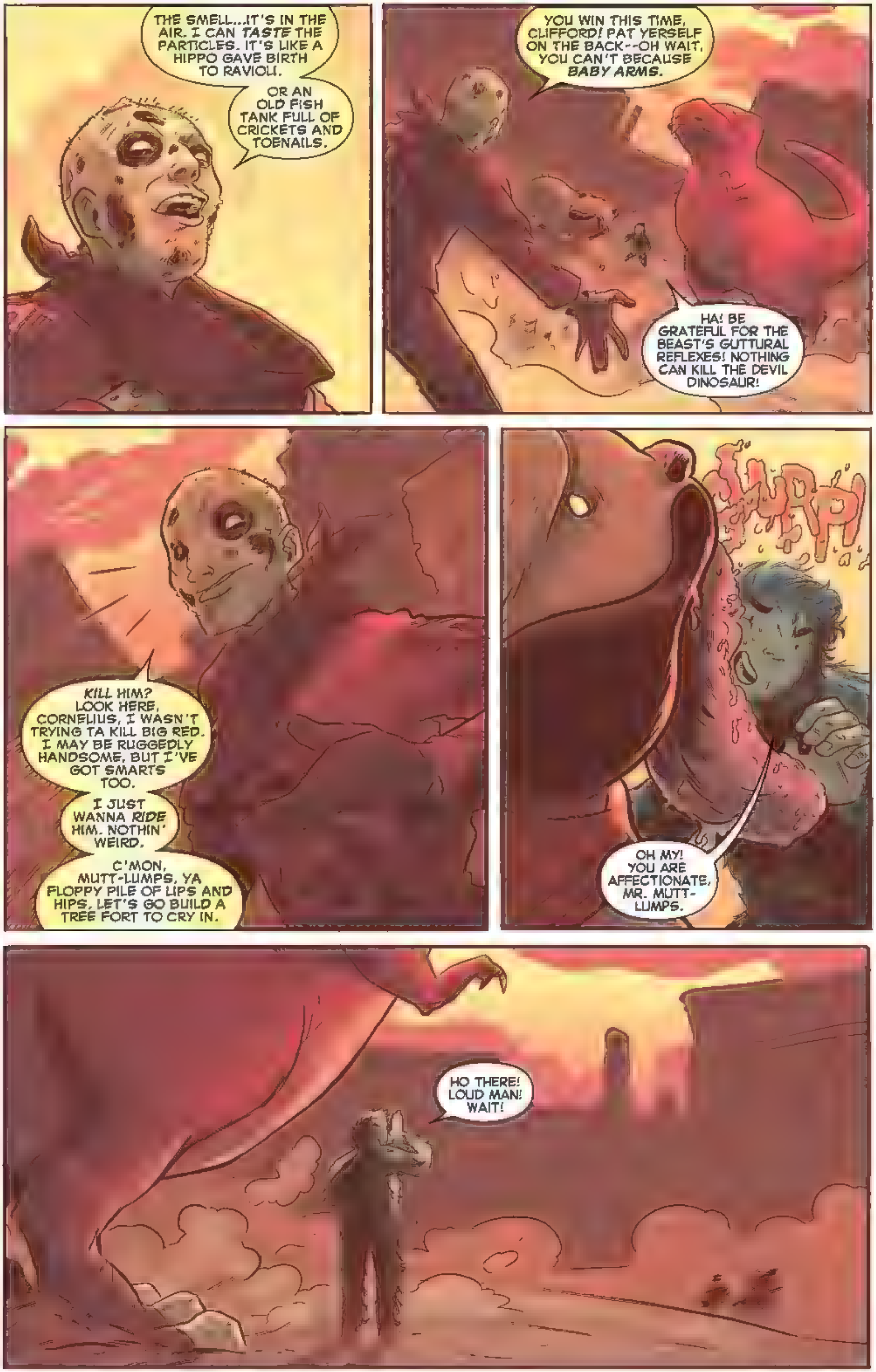

I HAVE THE NEED. THE *NEED* TO *STEED*.
ROAR!
THAT WAS A LITTLE *TOOTH* CLOSE!
SNAP!
DINO'S GOT A "RUNNY NOSE." HA!
SO, IT'S JUST THE THREE OF US.
THE GOOD...
...THE BAD...
...AND THE *AIRBORNE!*
HAPPY TRAILS, CHIM-CHIM!

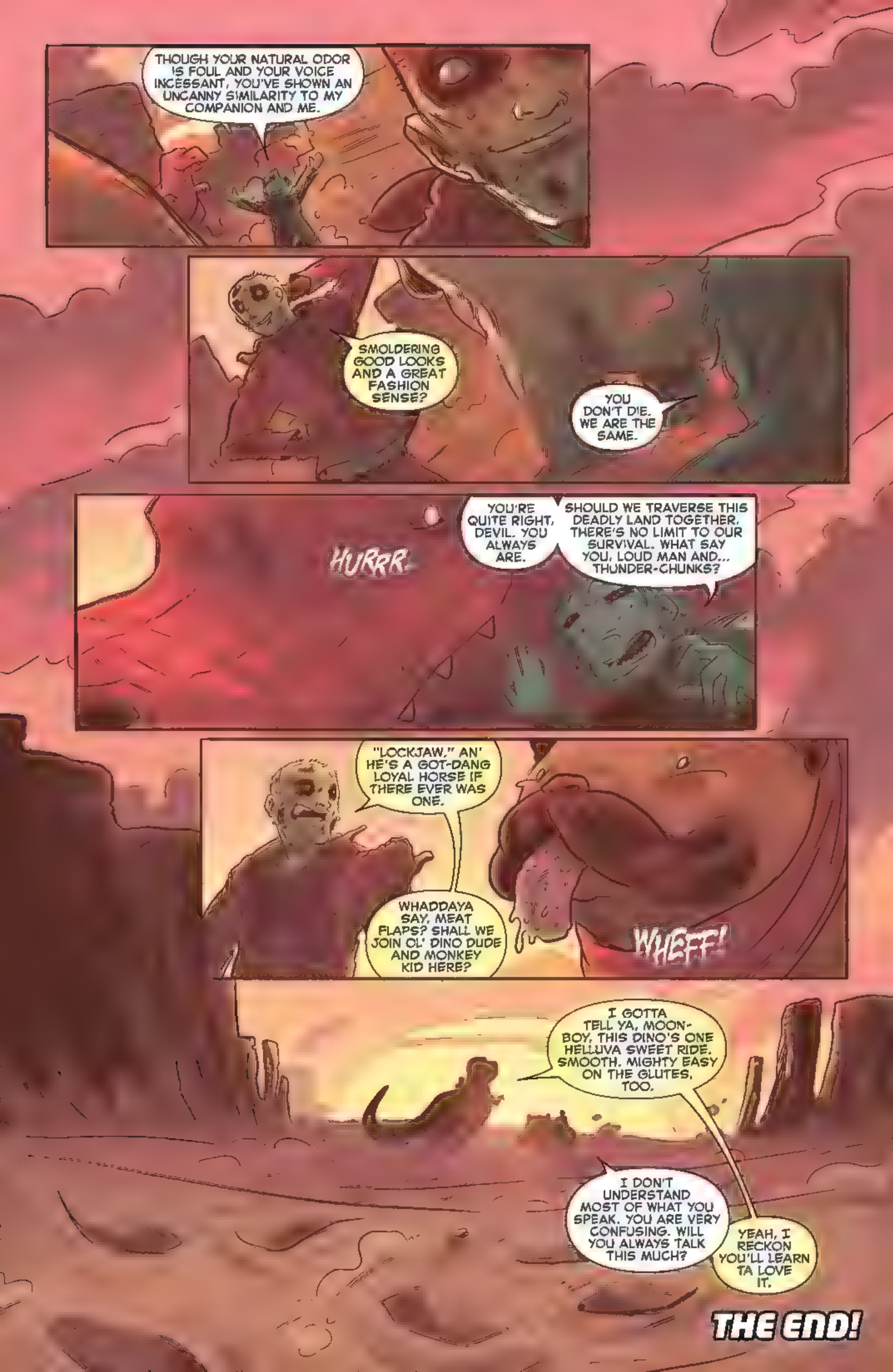

YESSS! FINALLY!
YIPPEE KI-YAY, MISTER FALCON!
NO! GO AWAY! YOU'RE YESTERDAY'S HORSE!
BAD, SWEAT FLAPS! VERY BAD!
HUFF! HUFF! HUFF!
CHOMP!
GGGRRRAAAHHH!
GGGRRRAAAVITY!
THOMP THOMP THOMP
YABBA DABBA DON'T!

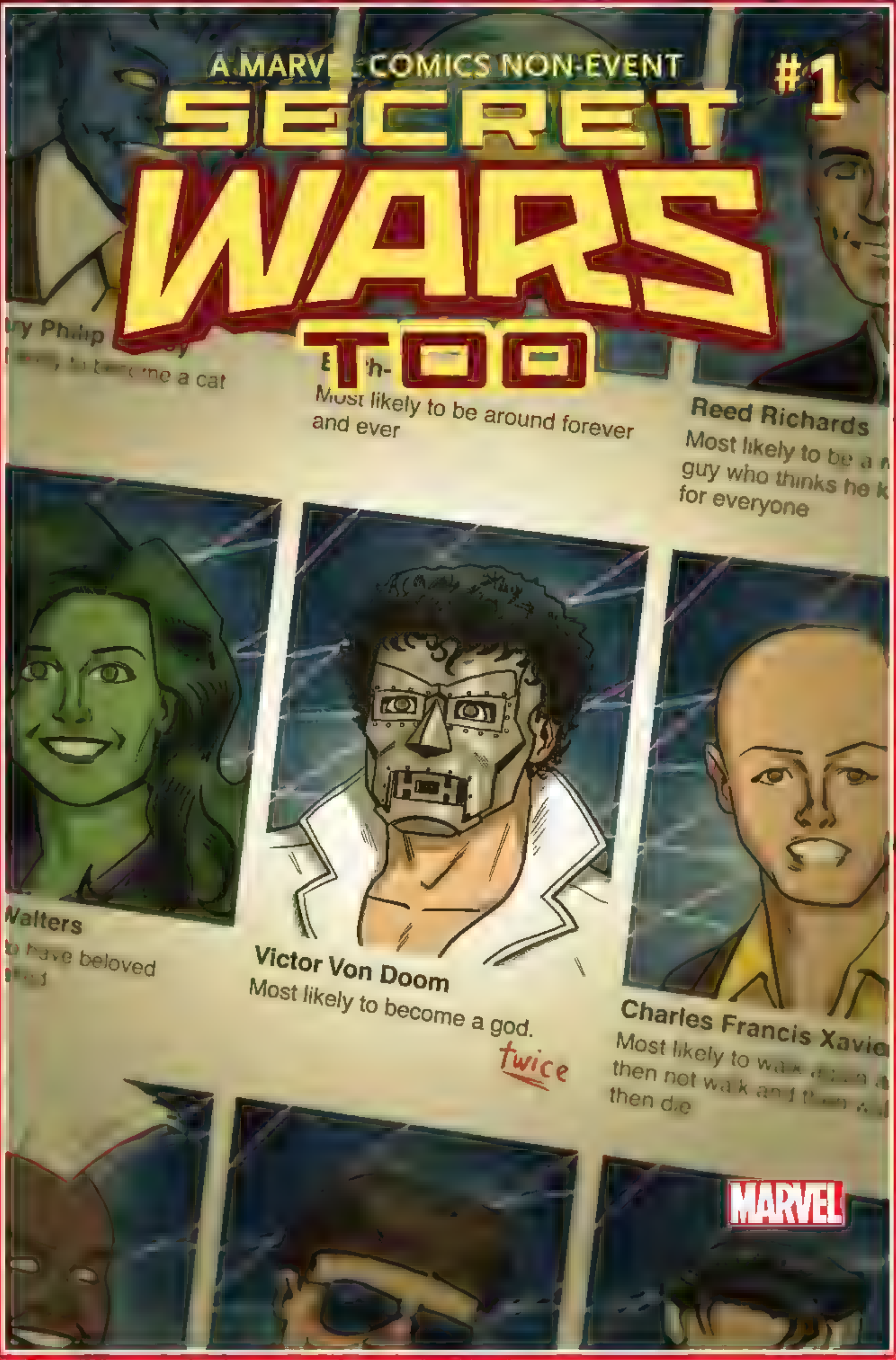

WOAH! HEEL, BOY!
YER GONNA MUCK UP M'DANG SUIT!
LOCKJAW, YA OVERGROWN FART FACTORY! STOP THIS THING!
BA-WOOF!
CH-CH-CH-CHOMP
HURK!
GGGRRRAAAPHYSICS!


KASHOOM
OOWWW-UHH! M'BACK! M'BACK'S ALL WHACKED, JACK!
SWEET DREAMS, YA BIG, RED, STUPID, FAT, UGLY, DUMB, DINO-FART-BUTT--
GRRAAHH!
GULP
SHAKING FIST
ROWLF?
I SEE YOUR FLAMBOYANT FRIEND FINALLY FOUND A FORMIDABLE FOE...


URK?
HACK!
CHUFF!
UGHHH OH GOD OH GOD OH GOD...!
WHY DID IT HAVE TO BE *SO HOT* IN THERE? ✧GAG✧
THAT WAS EASILY THE THIRD OR FOURTH NASTIEST THING I'VE EVER DONE.
I'VE WITNESSED THE DEVIL DINOSAUR CONSUME MANY A FLESH, BUT NONE HAVE TASTED SO PUTRID TO MAKE HIS INDOMITABLE PALATE REJECT IT.
YOUR COMPANION MUST BE TRULY AWFUL TO THE SENSES.

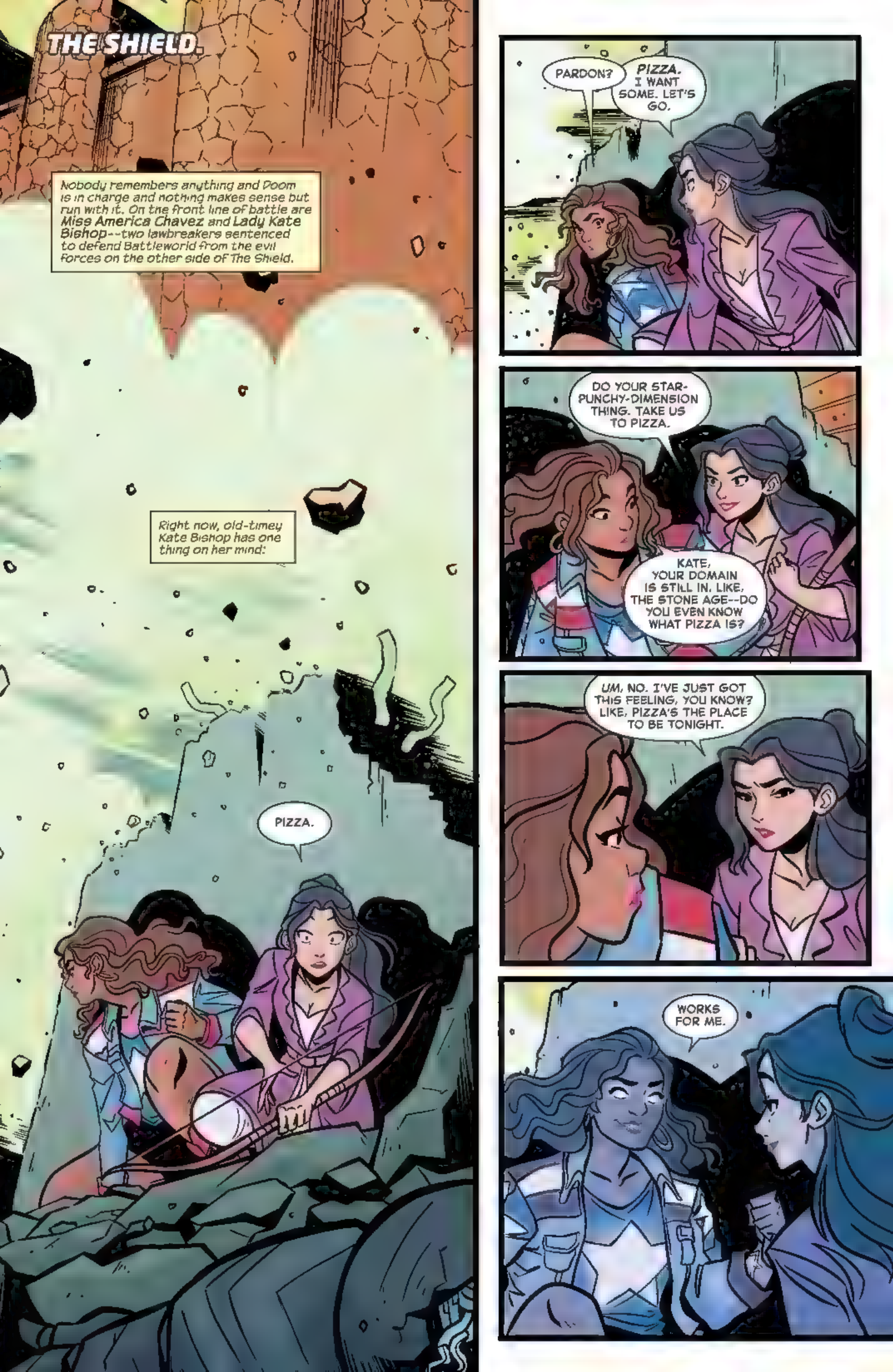

THE SMELL...IT'S IN THE AIR. I CAN *TASTE* THE PARTICLES. IT'S LIKE A HIPPO GAVE BIRTH TO RAVIOLI.
OR AN OLD FISH TANK FULL OF CRICKETS AND TOENAILS.
YOU WIN THIS TIME, CLIFFORD! PAT YERSELF ON THE BACK--OH WAIT, YOU CAN'T BECAUSE *BABY ARMS*.
HA! BE GRATEFUL FOR THE BEAST'S GUTTURAL REFLEXES! NOTHING CAN KILL THE DEVIL DINOSAUR!
KILL HIM? LOOK HERE, CORNELIUS, I WASN'T TRYING TA KILL BIG RED. I MAY BE RUGGEDLY HANDSOME, BUT I'VE GOT SMARTS TOO.
I JUST WANNA *RIDE* HIM. NOTHIN' WEIRD.
C'MON, MUTT-LUMPS, YA FLOPPY PILE OF LIPS AND HIPS. LET'S GO BUILD A TREE FORT TO CRY IN.
SHLURP!
OH MY! YOU ARE AFFECTIONATE, MR. MUTT-LUMPS.
HO THERE! LOUD MAN! WAIT!

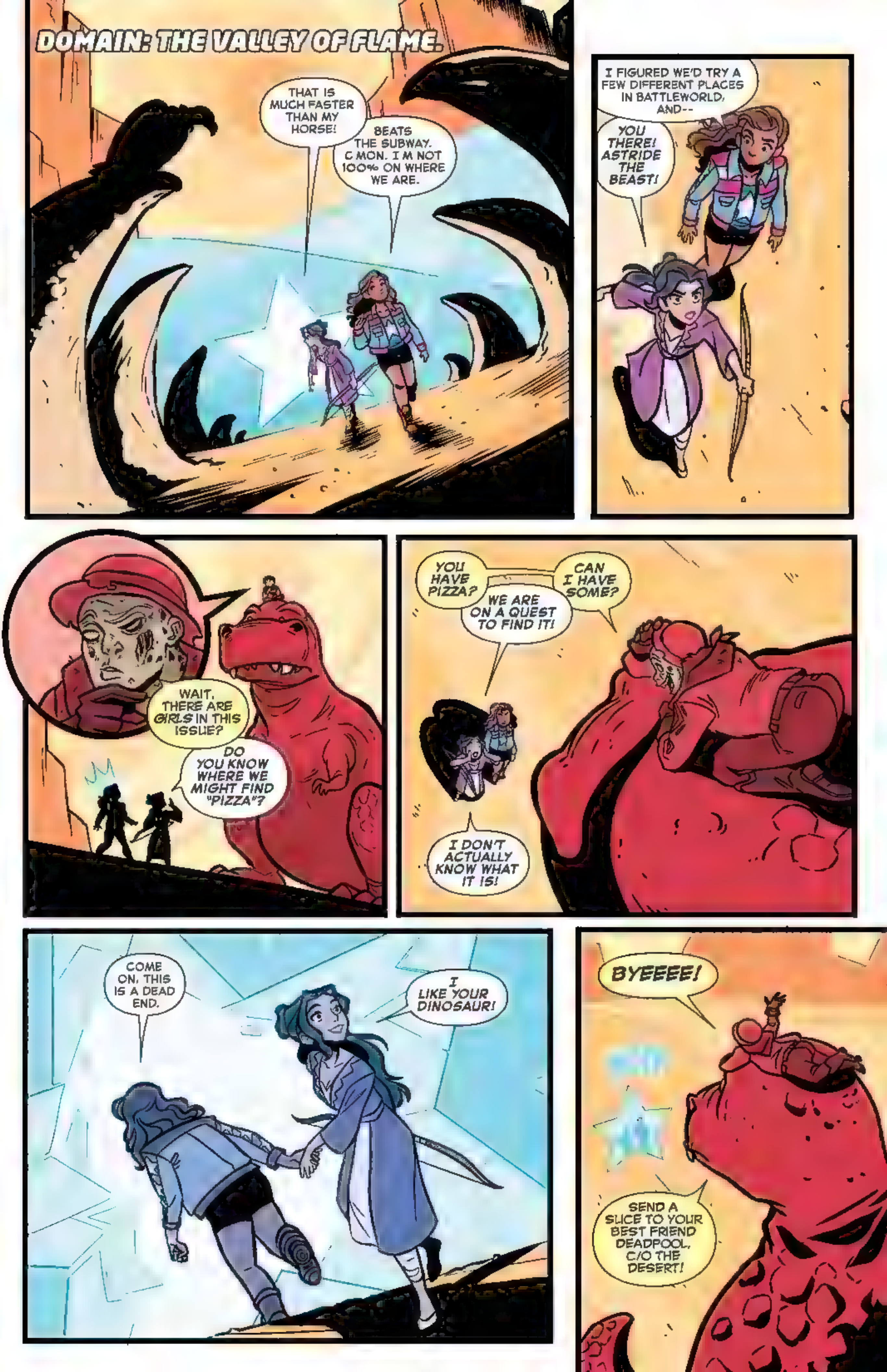

THOUGH YOUR NATURAL ODOR IS FOUL AND YOUR VOICE INCESSANT, YOU'VE SHOWN AN UNCANNY SIMILARITY TO MY COMPANION AND ME.
SMOLDERING GOOD LOOKS AND A GREAT FASHION SENSE?
YOU DON'T DIE. WE ARE THE SAME.
HURRR
YOU'RE QUITE RIGHT, DEVIL. YOU ALWAYS ARE.
SHOULD WE TRAVERSE THIS DEADLY LAND TOGETHER, THERE'S NO LIMIT TO OUR SURVIVAL. WHAT SAY YOU, LOUD MAN AND... THUNDER-CHUNKS?
"LOCKJAW," AN' HE'S A GOT-DANG LOYAL HORSE IF THERE EVER WAS ONE.
WHADDAYA SAY, MEAT FLAPS? SHALL WE JOIN OL' DINO DUDE AND MONKEY KID HERE?
WHEFF!
I GOTTA TELL YA, MOON-BOY, THIS DINO'S ONE HELLUVA SWEET RIDE. SMOOTH. MIGHTY EASY ON THE GLUTES, TOO.
I DON'T UNDERSTAND MOST OF WHAT YOU SPEAK. YOU ARE VERY CONFUSING. WILL YOU ALWAYS TALK THIS MUCH?
YEAH, I RECKON YOU'LL LEARN TA LOVE IT.
THE END!

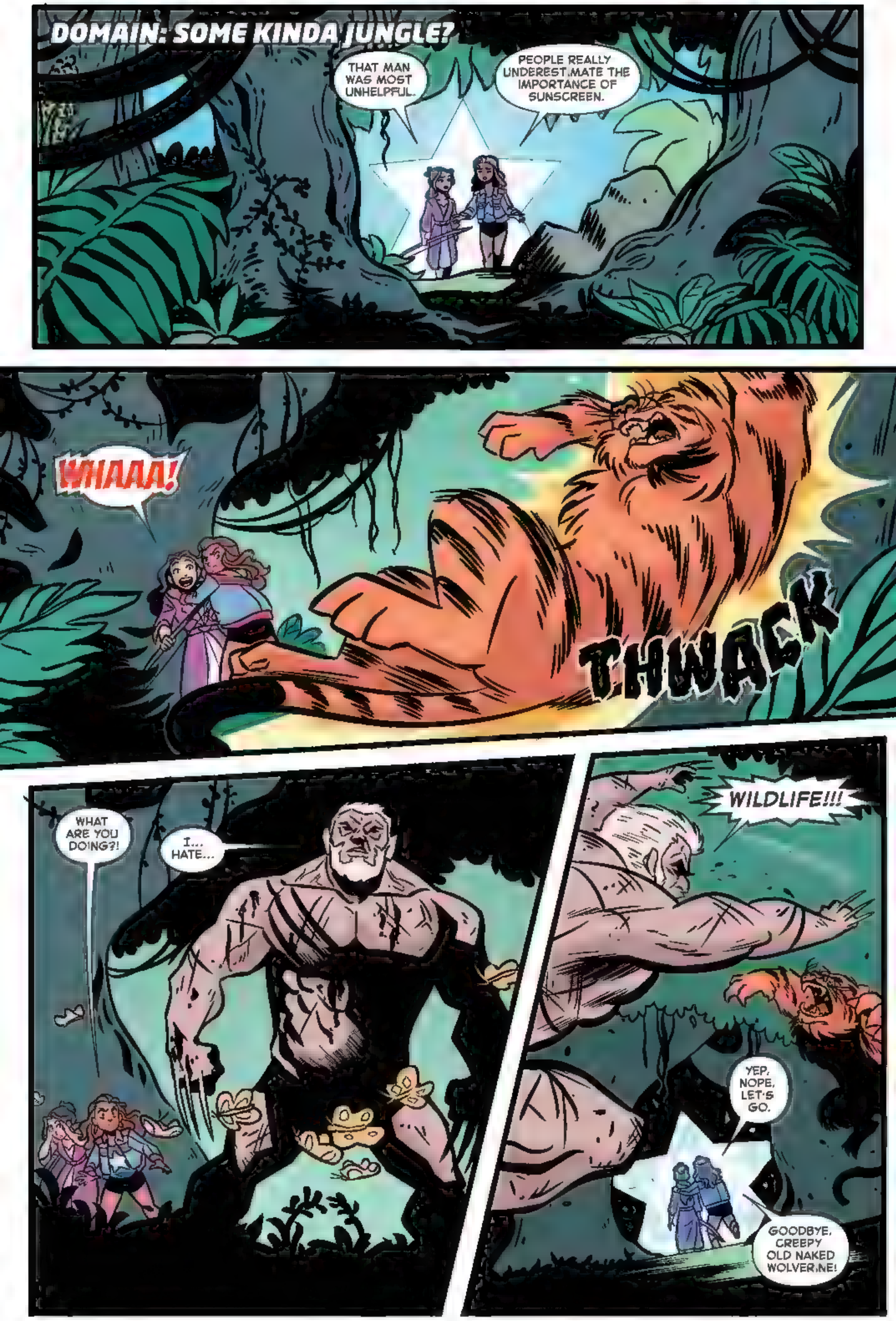

A MARVEL COMICS NON-EVENT
#1
SECRET WARS TOO
ury Philip
to become a cat
Most likely to be around forever and ever
Reed Richards
Most likely to be a
guy who thinks he k
for everyone
Walters
to have beloved
Victor Von Doom
Most likely to become a god.
twice
Charles Francis Xavie
Most likely to walk
then not walk and
then die
MARVEL

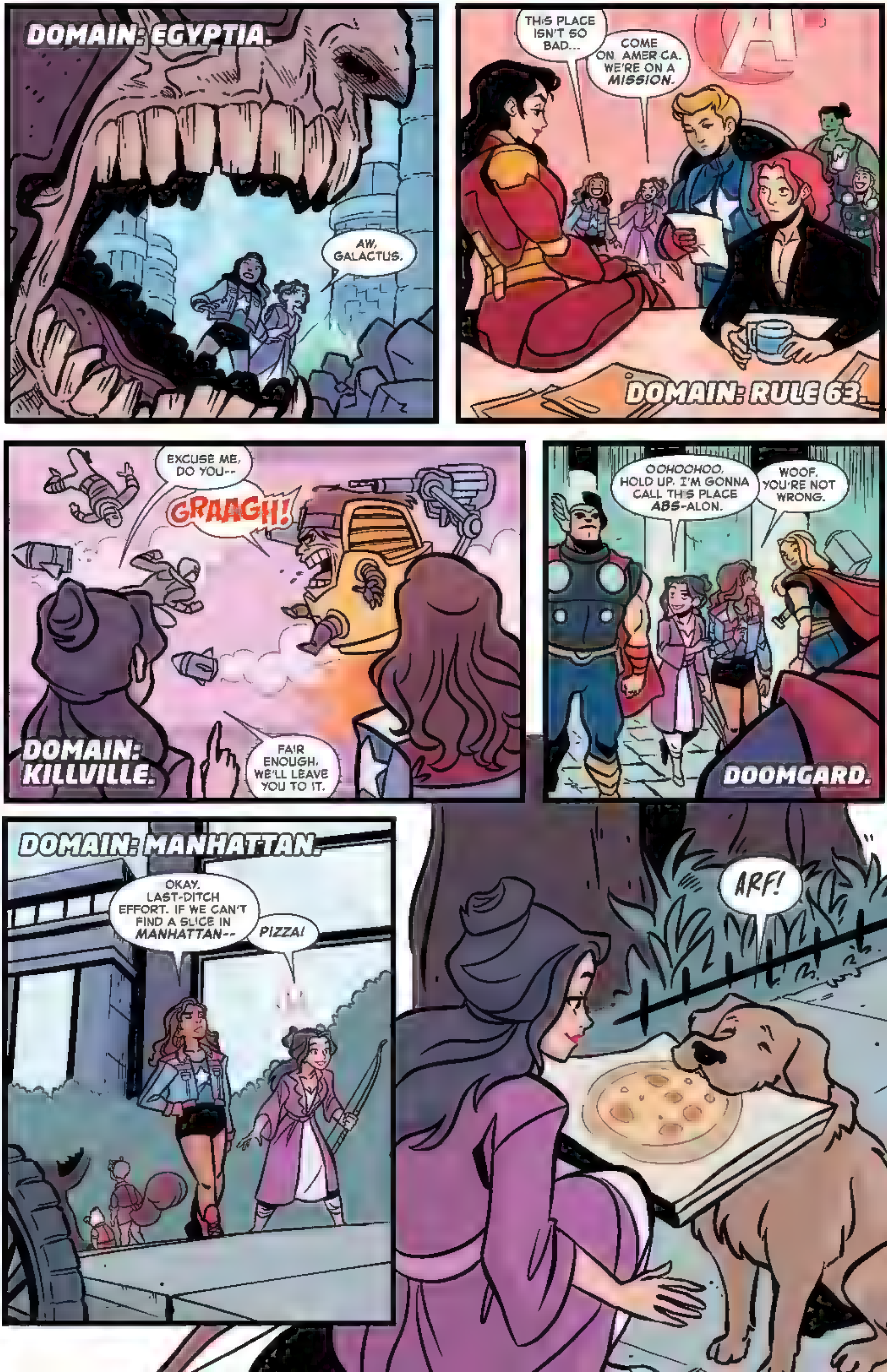
"PIZZA QUEST"

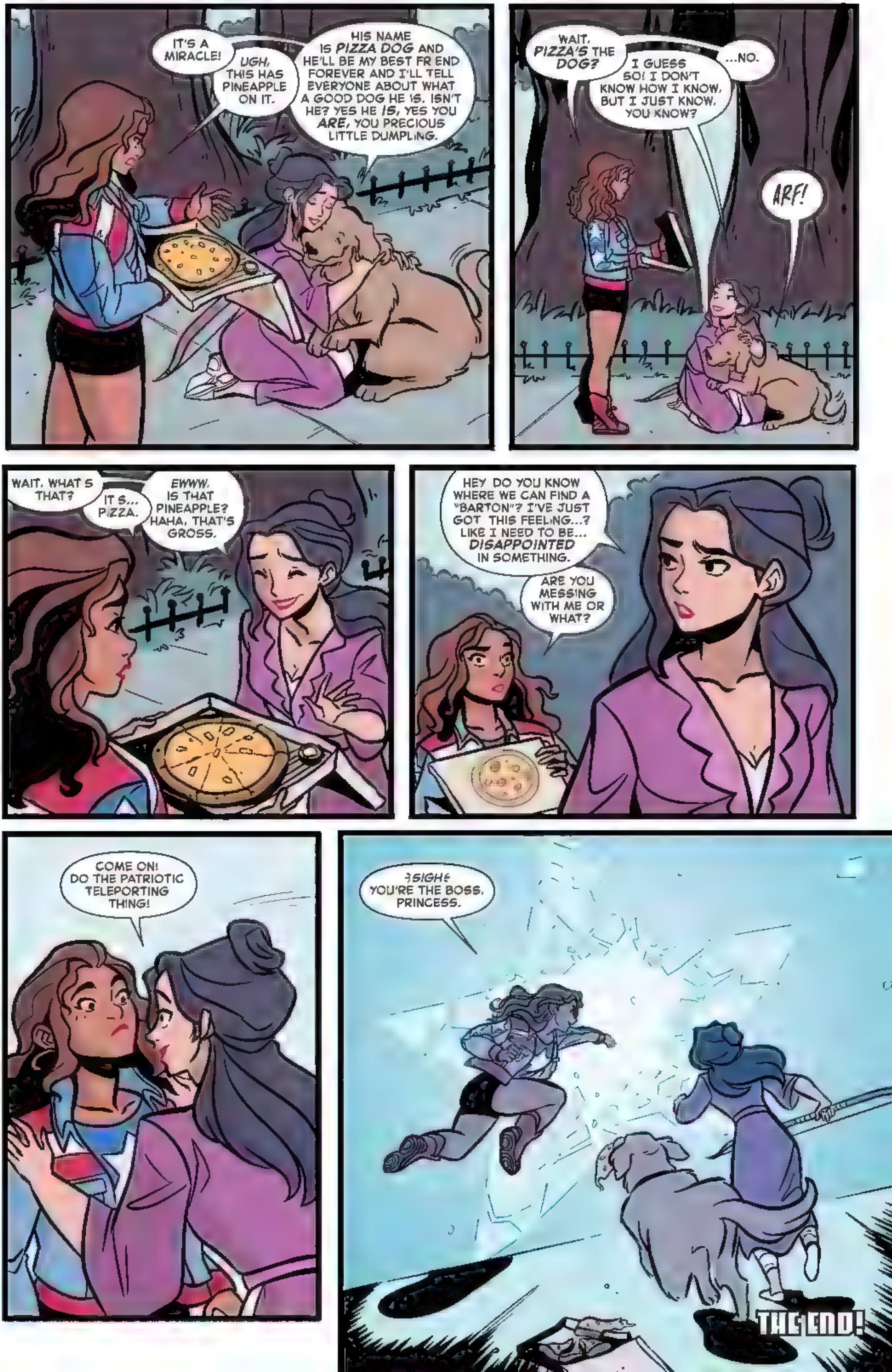
Writer: Kate Leth • Artist: Brittney L. Williams • Colorist: Megan Wilson • Letterer: Travis Lanham • Assistant Editors: Chris Robinson & Jon Moisan
Editor: Wil Moss • Executive Editor: Tom Brevoort • Cover Art: Chip Zdarsky


THE SHIELD.
Nobody remembers anything and Doom is in charge and nothing makes sense but run with it. On the front line of battle are Miss America Chavez and Lady Kate Bishop--two lawbreakers sentenced to defend Battleworld from the evil forces on the other side of The Shield.
Right now, old-timey Kate Bishop has one thing on her mind:
PIZZA.
PARDON?
PIZZA. I WANT SOME. LET'S GO.
DO YOUR STAR-PUNCHY-DIMENSION THING. TAKE US TO PIZZA.
KATE, YOUR DOMAIN IS STILL IN, LIKE, THE STONE AGE--DO YOU EVEN KNOW WHAT PIZZA IS?
UM, NO. I'VE JUST GOT THIS FEELING, YOU KNOW? LIKE, PIZZA'S THE PLACE TO BE TONIGHT.
WORKS FOR ME.

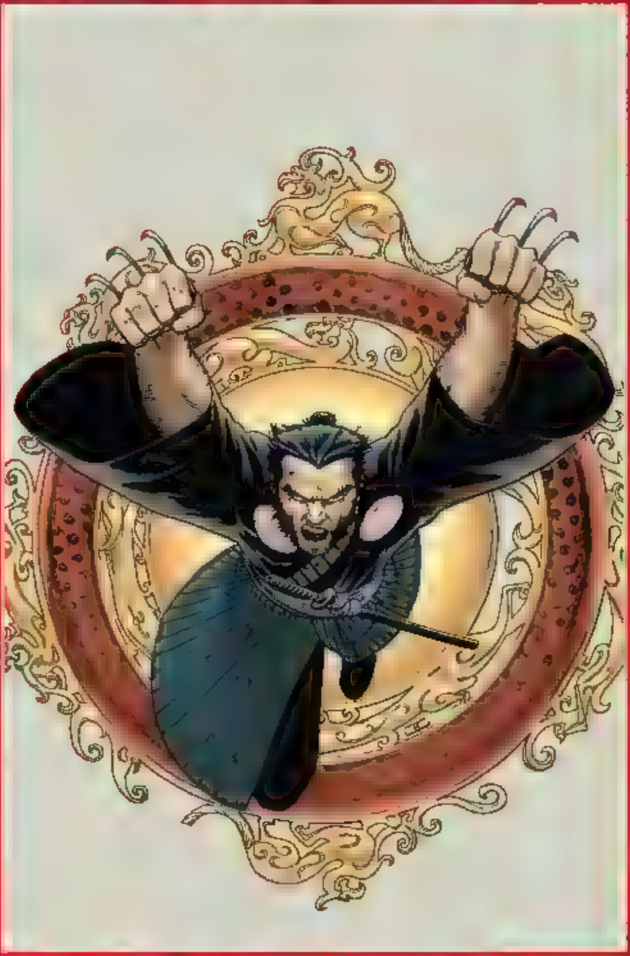

DOMAIN: THE VALLEY OF FLAME.
THAT IS MUCH FASTER THAN MY HORSE!
BEATS THE SUBWAY. C'MON. I'M NOT 100% ON WHERE WE ARE.
I FIGURED WE'D TRY A FEW DIFFERENT PLACES IN BATTLEWORLD, AND--
YOU THERE! ASTRIDE THE BEAST!
WAIT. THERE ARE GIRLS IN THIS ISSUE?
DO YOU KNOW WHERE WE MIGHT FIND "PIZZA"?
YOU HAVE PIZZA?
CAN I HAVE SOME?
WE ARE ON A QUEST TO FIND IT!
I DON'T ACTUALLY KNOW WHAT IT IS!
COME ON, THIS IS A DEAD END.
I LIKE YOUR DINOSAUR!
BYEEEEE!
SEND A SLICE TO YOUR BEST FRIEND DEADPOOL, C/O THE DESERT!


DOMAIN: SOME KINDA JUNGLE?
THAT MAN WAS MOST UNHELPFUL.
PEOPLE REALLY UNDERESTIMATE THE IMPORTANCE OF SUNSCREEN.
WHAAA!
THWACK
WHAT ARE YOU DOING?!
I... HATE...
WILDLIFE!!!
YEP, NOPE, LET'S GO.
GOODBYE, CREEPY OLD NAKED WOLVERINE!

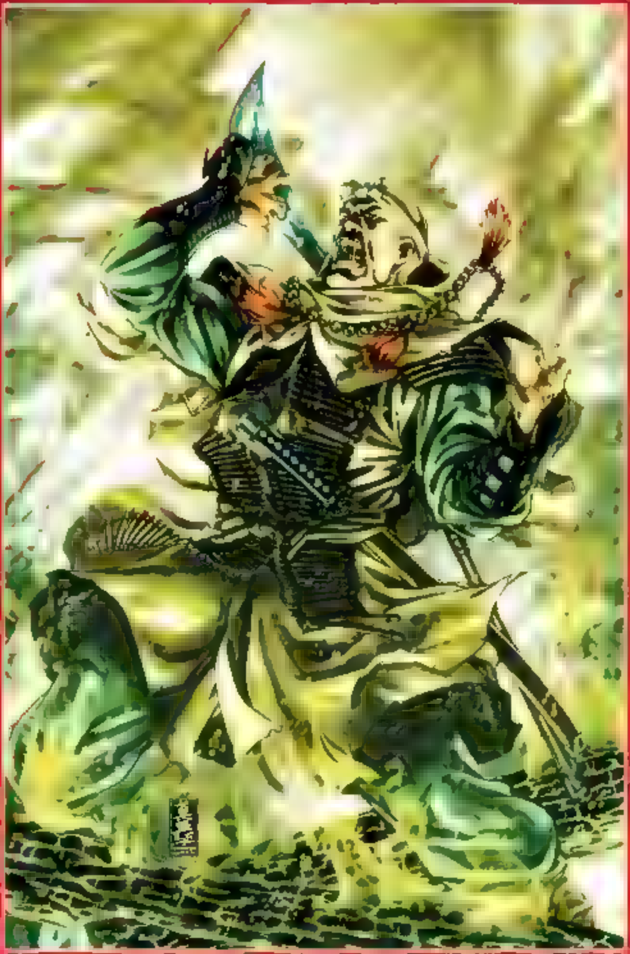

DOMAIN: EGYPTIA.
AW, GALACTUS.
THIS PLACE ISN'T SO BAD...
COME ON, AMERICA. WE'RE ON A MISSION.
DOMAIN: RULE 63.
EXCUSE ME, DO YOU--
GRAAGH!
DOMAIN: KILLVILLE.
FAIR ENOUGH, WE'LL LEAVE YOU TO IT.
OOHOOHOO, HOLD UP, I'M GONNA CALL THIS PLACE ABS-ALON.
WOOF, YOU'RE NOT WRONG.
DOOMGARD.
DOMAIN: MANHATTAN.
OKAY. LAST-DITCH EFFORT. IF WE CAN'T FIND A SLICE IN MANHATTAN--
PIZZA!
ARF!


IT'S A MIRACLE!
UGH, THIS HAS PINEAPPLE ON IT.
HIS NAME IS PIZZA DOG AND HE'LL BE MY BEST FRIEND FOREVER AND I'LL TELL EVERYONE ABOUT WHAT A GOOD DOG HE IS. ISN'T HE? YES HE IS, YES YOU ARE, YOU PRECIOUS LITTLE DUMPLING.
WAIT, PIZZA'S THE DOG?
I GUESS SO! I DON'T KNOW HOW I KNOW, BUT I JUST KNOW, YOU KNOW?
...NO.
ARF!
WAIT, WHAT'S THAT?
IT'S... PIZZA.
EWWW, IS THAT PINEAPPLE? HAHA, THAT'S GROSS.
HEY, DO YOU KNOW WHERE WE CAN FIND A "BARTON"? I'VE JUST GOT THIS FEELING...? LIKE I NEED TO BE... DISAPPOINTED IN SOMETHING.
ARE YOU MESSING WITH ME OR WHAT?
COME ON! DO THE PATRIOTIC TELEPORTING THING!
SIGH YOU'RE THE BOSS, PRINCESS.
THE END!

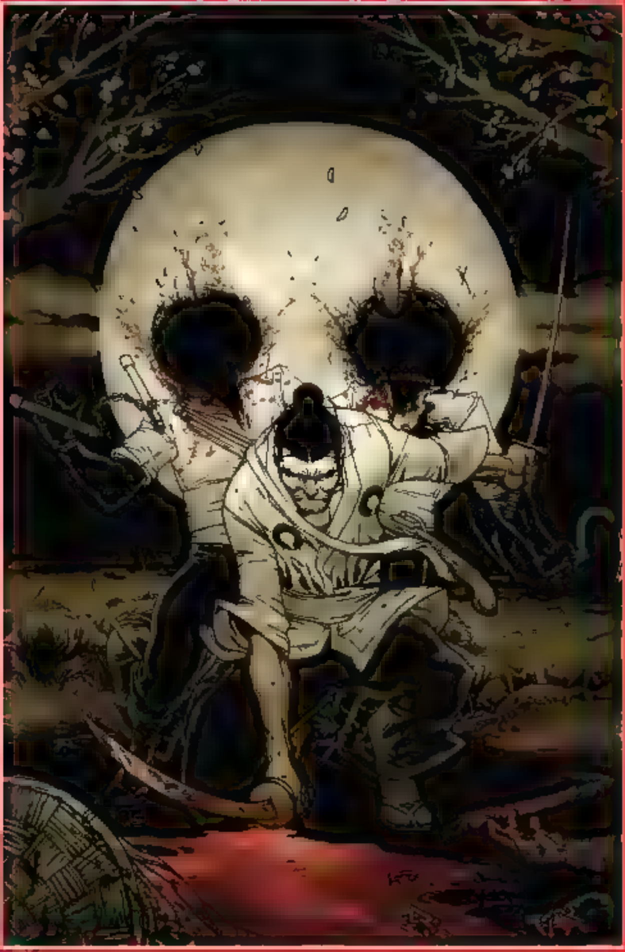
5 RONIN #1 VARIANT BY JOHN CASSADAY & LAURA MARTIN



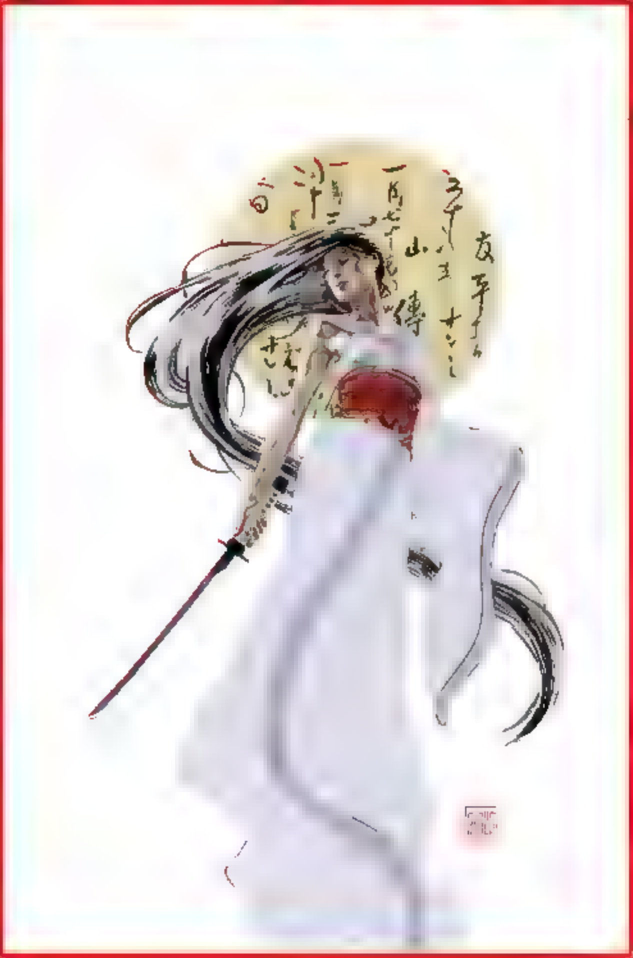
5 RONIN #2 VARIANT BY MARK BROOKS



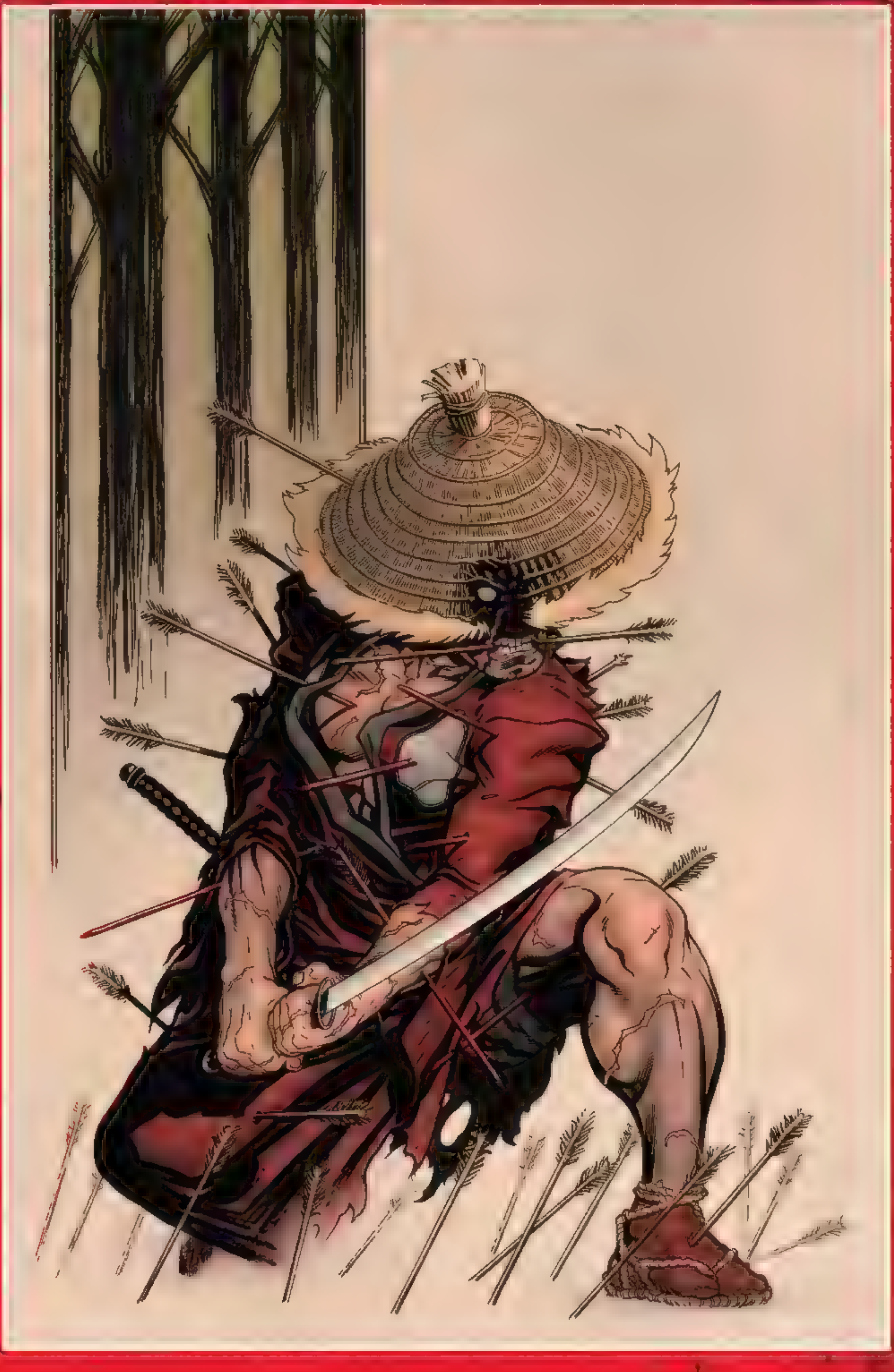
5 RONIN #3 VARIANT BY GIUSEPPE CAMUNCOLI & FRANK D'ARMATA



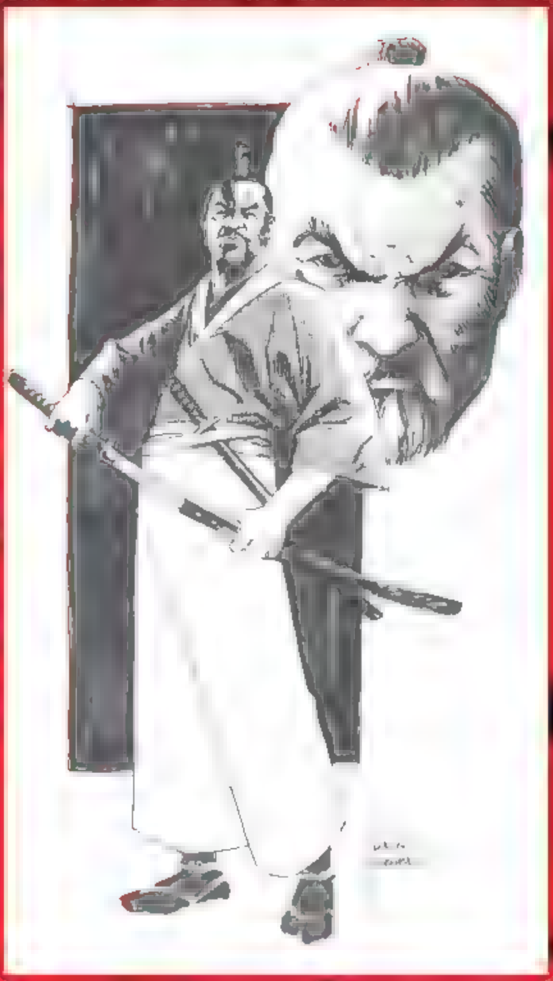
5 RONIN #4 VARIANT BY DAVID MACK

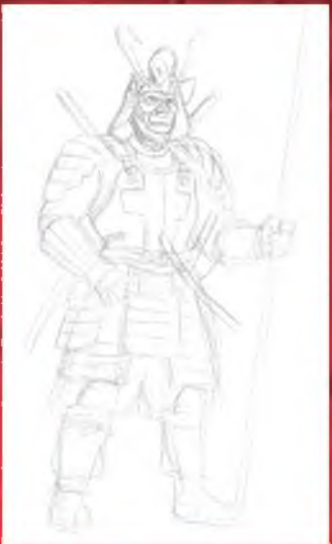


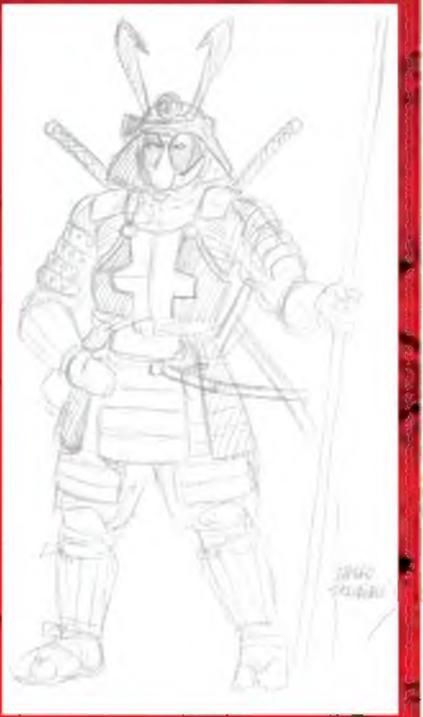
5 RONIN #1 VARIANT BY ED McGUINNESS & MORRY HOLLOWELL

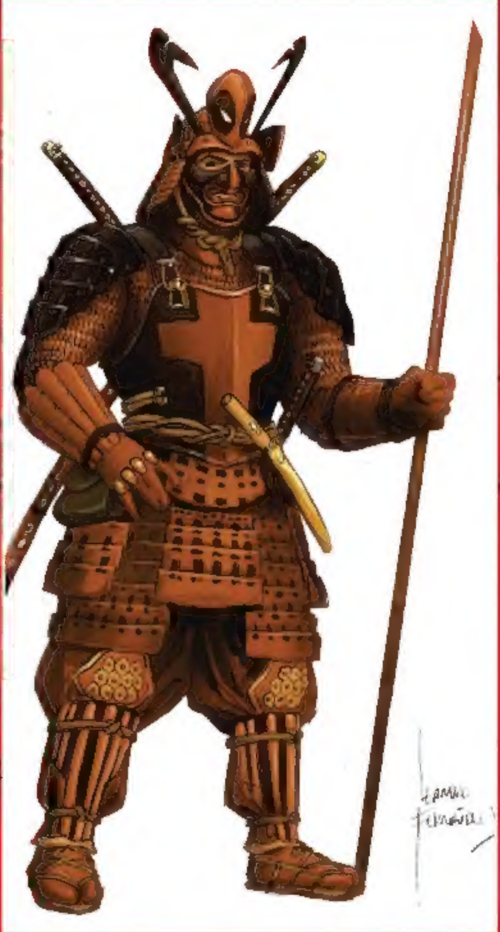


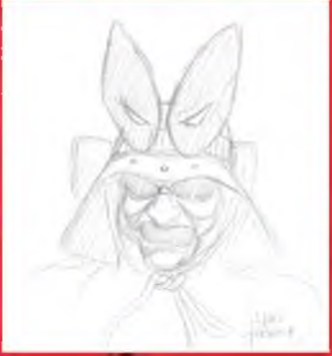
CHARACTER SKETCHES BY LEANDRO FERNANDEZ

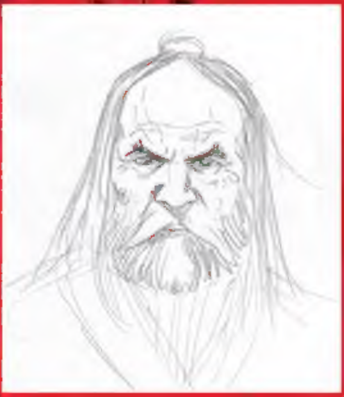


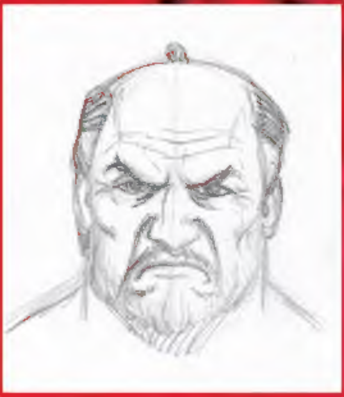


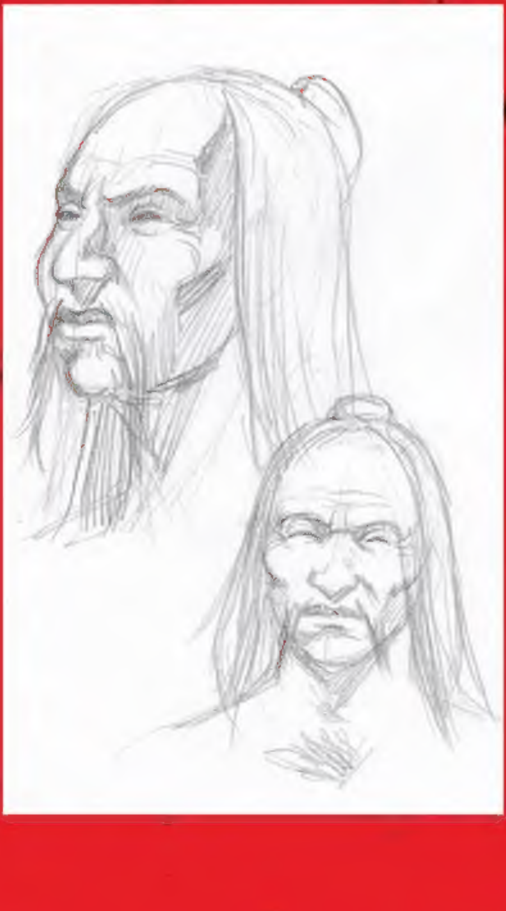


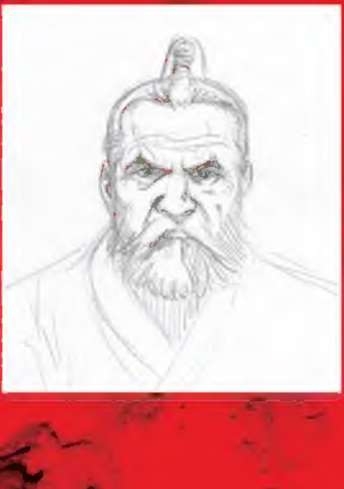


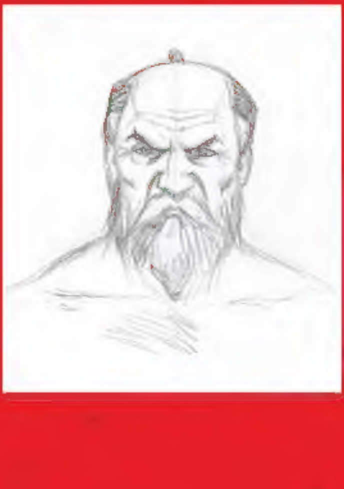




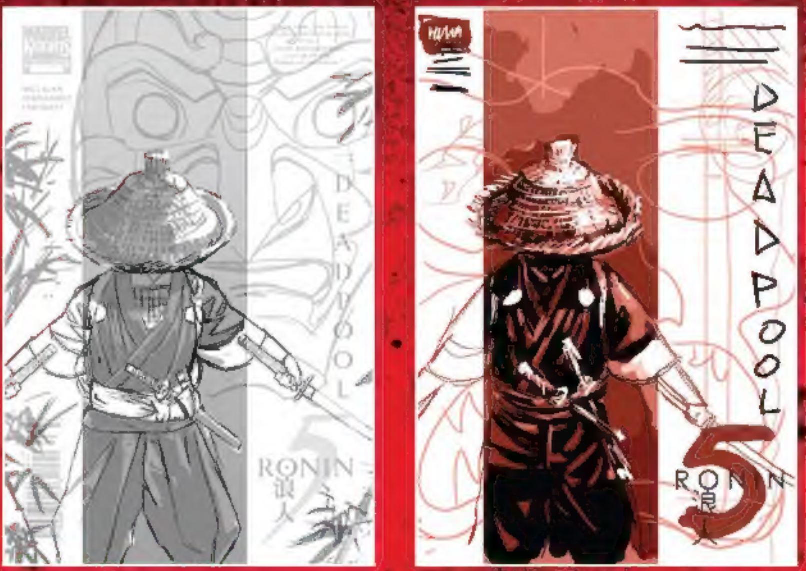




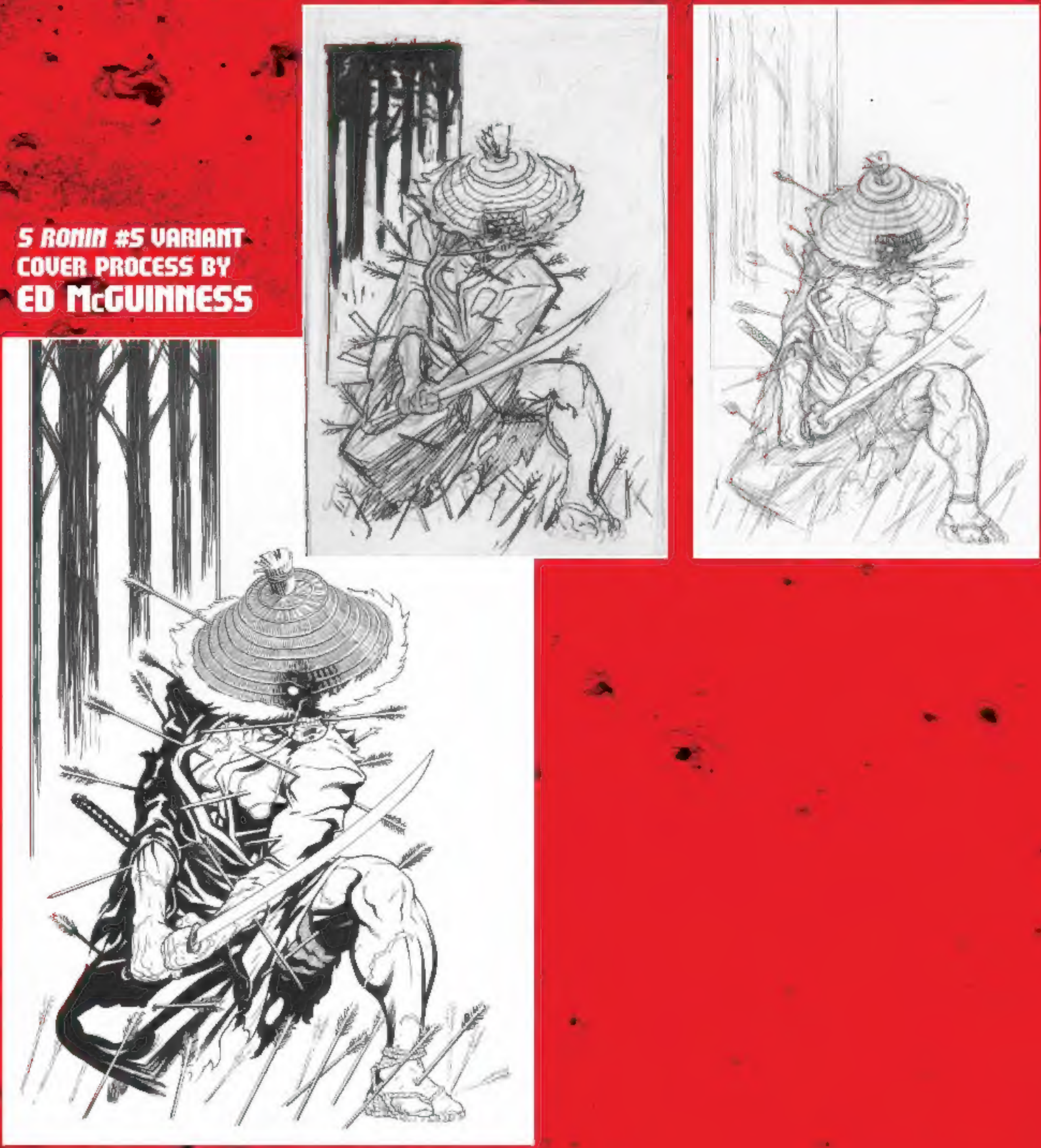




5 RONIN #5 COVER SKETCHES BY **DAVID AJA**


DEADPOOL
5
RONIN
DEADPOOL
5
RONIN

5 RONIN #5 VARIANT COVER PROCESS BY **ED McGUINNESS**



MEET THE DEADPOOL OF THE ULTIMATE UNIVERSE — AND A FEW OTHER MULTIVERSAL MERCS FOR GOOD MEASURE!

When Ultimate Spider-Man visits the X-Mansion, he finds it's been taken over by his world's Wadey Wilson and the Reavers! Will other realities have more delightful Deadpools? Find out in a tour across dimensions that showcases animated Deadpool, MC2 Deadpool, samurai Deadpool and more! The universe-hopping Exiles meet the dangerous Deadpool of Weapon X, and Battleworld hosts the Deadpool of 1872! But who is the Deadpool of Counter-Earth? And what happens when the Venom symbiote possesses Deadpool?!

PARENTAL ADVISORY

MARVEL

Collecting *Ultimate Spider-Man (2000) #91-94, Heroes Reborn: Remnants, Exiles (2001) #5-6, #12-13 and #66-68, Venom/Deadpool: What If?, 5 Ronin #1-5, Marvel Adventures Super Heroes (2010) #4, Marvel Universe Ultimate Spider-Man: Web-Warriors #8,* and material from *J2 #11, Secret Wars: Battleworld #3* and *Secret Wars, Too #1* – written by Brian Michael Bendis, Joe Kelly, Judd Winick, Tony Bedard, Rick Remender, Peter Milligan, Paul Tobin and more, and illustrated by Mark Bagley, Jim Calafiore, Mike McKone, Shawn Moll, Tomm Coker, Dalibor Talajic, Laurence Campbell, Goran Parlov, Leandro Fernandez, Ronan Cliquet and more.

Shadowcat